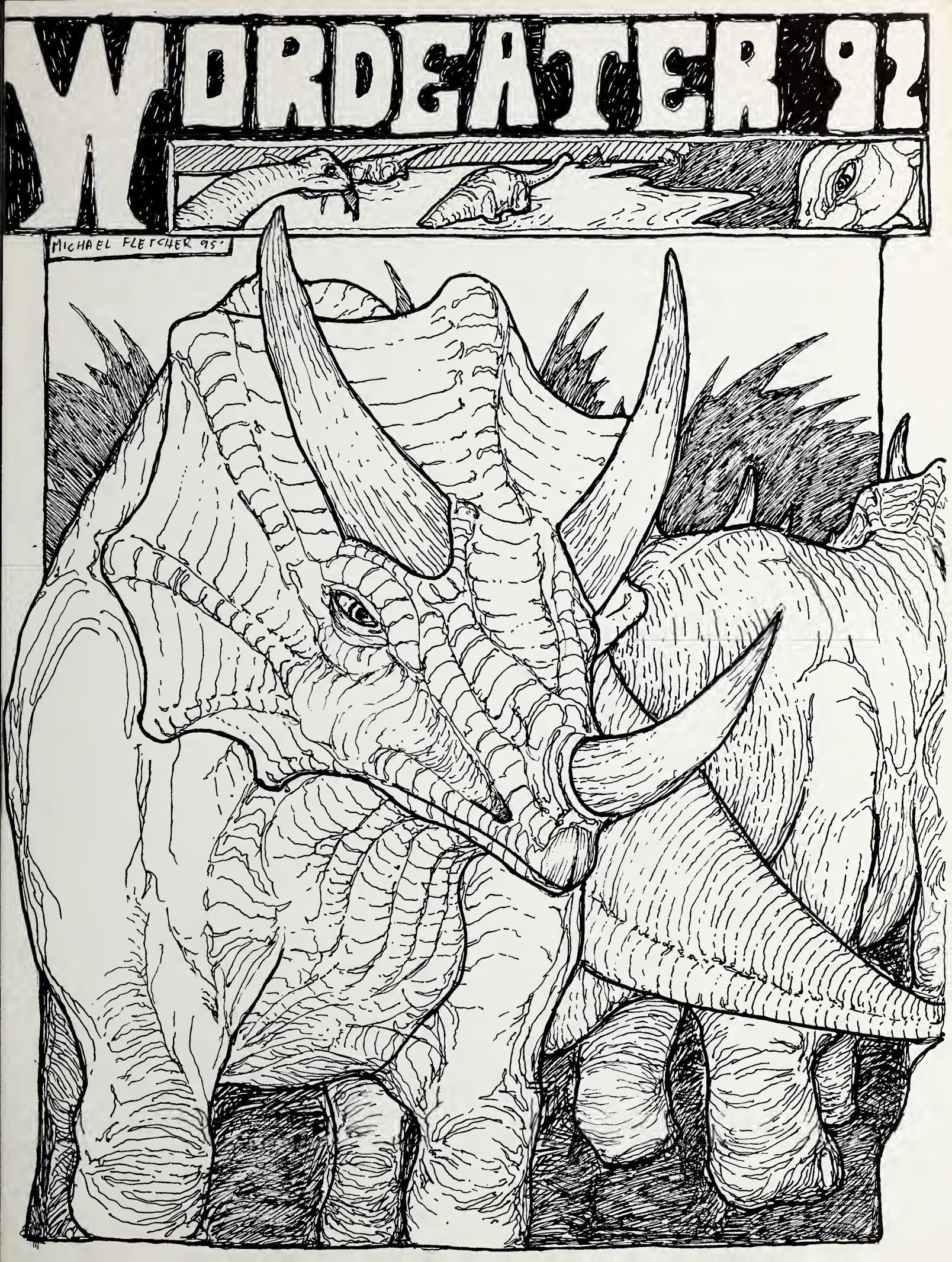
WORDEATER 92
MICHAEL FLETCHER 95'

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The Abortion

by Nancy Aydlett

"Count backwards from a hundred by ones."

"Ninety-nine, ninety-eight, ninety-seven . . ." sluggish, syrupy sleep silenced the sharp pain of the needle, crept up her forearm and with a tired sigh, eased into her body, slowed her breathing to even, regular inhalation and stopped the frantic beating deep within her chest. Her entire body relaxed, flowed to the drugged rhythm.

"Can you feel any pain?"

Dully, she looked at the long snake-like thing coiled around his neck. It seemed to quiver and move of its new volition. With an effort, she forced herself to look at him, tried to see past the glare on his glasses.

"Can you feel any pain?" the question was repeated with impatience.

"No." Her tongue felt swollen and fuzzy; it seemed too large to fit in her mouth. She ached to cry out, to somehow stop him but she was powerless to move. Soft blackness crept to the edge of her vision and threatened to close her eyes. She fought the drug until she felt physically ill, then succumbed with a silent, exhausted sigh.

Maybe now I can sleep, she was only dimly aware of thinking, maybe now I can forget all of this. God, how did this happen? What am I doing here? God, WHAT HAVE I DONE? Though physical tears could not form in her aching eyes, she was inwardly screaming and hating with every last ounce left to her. She HATED him; HE had caused this; HE was the one who should be here, with HIS legs spread-eagled below him and humiliated. Instead, he was probably out with Syd, screwing with her again; the way he'd been screwing with her for the past six months.

She remembered the wide-eyed, vehement denials. The constant bursts of anger when she had questioned his fidelity still echoed in her memory.

"I've never cheated on you since we've started going together!" his normally tanned face seemed paler that usual; did not support the anger in his voice, "You're crazy!"

And, as usual, she had acquiesced meekly, not pushed the point, even though Syd had told her differently. Again, she remembered their confrontation in the barracks' hallway. Syd had volunteered the information, uncaring of its effects.

Momma, where are you? Momma, I need you -- I'm in trouble and I don't know how to handle it. I don't know how to tell you without breaking your heart. Oh, GOD, I want to go home!

Even as the silent outcry ended, she saw herself when she was only seven. The little girl ran to her mother standing at the kitchen sink, tears streaming down her face. She had run away from home and been found hours later walking down the highway, apparently lost. Her mother had dropped the vegetables in the sink and held her tightly.

That same little girl had had a nightmare several years later, in which she had seen her mother die. She had awakened, screaming and crying and had found herself in her mother's arms.

She saw herself, now only a few days ago -- twenty-two years later. She sat in the doctor's office, listened in half-believing astonishment. The glasses gleamed at her as he nodded.

"You're eight weeks pregnant," he said, "I'm sure that you'll wand to terminate it, considering you're still in the Navy. Regulations have changed, women aren't treated the way they used to be. Pregnancy is no excuse not to fulfill your obligation." His words seemed to echo through her head, bounded from the walls and hit her squarely in the chest. It was difficult to breathe.

I'm not going to make it, she remembered thinking, I'm going to have a breakdown. God help me, I can't make it by myself. A BABY. What am I going to do with a BABY?

The little girl returned to her mind. Her face was innocent, devoid of age and experience. Momma, I feel so dirty; I feel like I've let you down again, only this time I've really done it.

I really need you now, Momma.

The little girl's mouth, her mouth, opened as sudden, blinding pain exploded from somewhere deep inside her. With a tremendous effort, she opened her eyes. Below her sheet-covered knees stood the doctor, glasses slipping down his nose. The pain built in intensity until it forced her slackened mouth open with a scream. Deep within her, the little girl screamed in unison; seemed to be losing her footing.

She watched the doctor reach out to switch on a small green machine, vaguely heard the muffled whine and felt the knife deep inside her begin its awful work. She watched the girl start to slide away from her childhood. Unseen hands switched on the vacuum that began to pull the child away from her innocence and naiveté, away from the protective arms of her mother. Then the machine sucked out her body and her soul

The Idols

by Gina Bakon

Growing up, my neighbors and I formed the perfect trio to chase down the ultimate adventures. Kenny, who was my age, had brown hair. His younger brother Jeff had blonde hair. And I am a female, with brown hair (or at least I had brown hair when I was young). Why are these characteristics so relevant? They matched those of our adventure seeking heroes at the time. No, they weren't Superman and Wonderwoman or any other of the "superheroes." We found our childhood idols in the TV series The Dukes of Hazzard: and in the Star Wars movies. Bo, Luke and Daisy, and Han, Luke, Leia were respectively real and alive on any given day in the bodies of two fifth graders and a second grader. These characters only existed amongst the three of us. Any more kids involved would have shifted the balance of power in our own Hazzard County and in the Force. I never had to fight with our friend Jill, who lived a couple blocks away, to be Princess Leia because I was the one and only female lead. Even though Luke was the main hero in Star Wars,Han was clearly the cooler, tougher, thrill seeker. This made the role perfect for Kenny, since he was older than Jeff and had brown hair (and I must admit he was paired with Princess Leia). Anyway, there was no question with us about who played what role.

Our terrain for adventure (A.K.A. Kenny's backyard) was well equipped with obstacles, secret passages and hiding places. Our battleground consisted of a three car garage (with three separate side doors), a five foot by ten foot pile of firewood, a small semi-truck in a side drive (for their meat company), a concrete driveway that extended through most of their half acre lot, and a long fenced-in dog kennel. A jungle gym served as a startup and a thick rope hanging from a gigantic oak tree nearby helped us in getaways. Our hideout was in another neighbor's tree, in which the first branch could just be reached while standing on top of a dirt bike, our preferred means of transportation.

Our dirt bikes doubled as the "General Lee", (the car of the Duke boys, for those who have lived a sheltered life) and as our personal starfighters. Kenny's bike was silver with black racing stripes and had three speeds. Jeff used Kenny's old blue bike, which had the best hand grips. I thought I was the coolest with my stylish Pink Huffy dirt bike. We thought we could handle anything with our bikes. One day Kenny proved that our little adventures didn't always work out the way our parents would have liked.

The Stunt

In the tradition of the Duke boys and the General Lee, we jumped over rivers and ditches while yelling "Yee-hee-haw!" and built our own obstacle course. The pile of firewood came in very handy for this. A board nailed to a huge log made a pretty stable ramp to jump our bikes over. One day, while Jeff and I were having a contest to see who could make the biggest skid mark, Kenny was trying to perfect a death-defying stunt. It was a trick that he had seen the biggest trouble-maker in fifth grade attempt to do in the school parking lot. At this point in time, free styling on dirt bikes (the coolest thing that preceded skateboard contests) was still in the very early states. Needless to say, neither the trouble-maker or Kenny had any idea of what they were doing. Whatever it was, Kenny was trying to do it while jumping one of our highest ramps. He hit a glitch during one of his trail runs and the only thing that Jeff and I saw was the wipe-out. Kenny and the bike were parallel to the ground sliding six feet across the concrete. He must have blacked-out for a moment because when the bike stopped moving, so did Kenny. Jeff and I started screaming for his mom to come outside, and when she did, she looked like she was going to yell and cry at the same time. We pulled the bike away and I ran to get my mom. When my mom and I got back, he was in the house lying on the couch with a bloody towel to his head. We were all scared, but in the back of our minds, Kenny, Jeff and I really though that everything that was happening was pretty cool. Especially when the paramedics tried to walk him to an ambulance and he began to faint. They had to put him on a stretcher and wheel him outside.

Jeff and I couldn't go to the hospital, but when we came outside and saw the neighbors and other kids standing around to see what had happened, we knew we would be the ones to tell of our adventure. Even though the accident didn't exactly happen to us, Jeff and I were in the spotlight...that is until Kenny came home with an awesome 22 stitches and a slight concussion. Kenny was now a veteran. He had been injured in the line of play and adventure and had a scar to prove his toughness. A real Han Solo. Granted he could have been killed -- his neck could have snapped and he could have broken his leg, but at that time, we were the Dukes! We were invincible! Yee-hee-haw!

The Modern Heroine and the Importance of Play

The world needs more Princess Leias.

When I was little, there was a budding feminist inside me that had already begun to grow and was present in whatever character I was betraying. When I was with the guys, *my* Daisy Duke was not portrayed as the sex symbol who created the "Daisy Duke" short shorts that were strutted by Catherine Bach on a pair of stiletto heels. My Daisy Duke knew karate and beat the hell our of our imaginary bad guys. Not to say that Daisy Duke couldn't hold her own in the TV series, but in fifth grade, we were more interested in the action rather than the sexual tensions the show portrayed.

However, with Princess Leia, I didn't have to change any of the rules. Sure she was beautiful and came from a wealthy, royal family; but she had guts. She was a political ambassador, a spy, she knew how to use a laser gun, and she was the only one smart enough to steal the enemy plans and send for Obi-Wan Kenobi when her people were in trouble. On top of that, she knew how to be sarcastic, how to make Han Solo come crawling to her, and didn't even flinch when facing Darth Vader.

My sister will be going into fifth grade next year and I am worried about her. She has yet to flee from Imperial Troops from the dark side or try to capture foreign spies that stole the secret plans. The closest my sister has come to adventurous play was during a brief obsession she had to be the Pink Power Ranger. Since all of her friends are girls, there were battles over who would be "Kimberly", the Pink Power Ranger. Their concern to be Kimberly was the fact that they thought she was prettier than the Yellow Power Ranger girl. Also, because Kimberly's boyfriend was Tommy, the Green Power Ranger, who was the "cutest" boy on the show.

Hillary Clinton

I know that there are many more strong feminine role models for young girls now than there were when I was growing up, and especially more than when my mother was a child. My concern in that for 7,8,9 and 10 year-olds today, it's hard for them to play house as a career-woman/mother/wife who can practice law, be involved in government and still keep the children happy/healthy while still exploring her femininity. Hillary Clinton is an example of a good role model for young women, but how many third graders actually play "First Lady" instead of "house". When my girlfriends and I really wanted to play when we were young, we could be characters like "Wonderwoman" or "Charlie's Angels".

We could use our imagination and play women who got to chase the bad guys just as much as the boys, and most of the time we could think of more clever ways to initiate our plans. The fact that I grew up with "Tomboy" qualities probably explains my viewpoint. I climbed trees, had football cards and traded Matchbox cars. My favorite color was also pink and I enjoyed braiding Barbie's hair. I was a good combination of what the majority of the feminists today are talking about. I was confident and felt that I was equal to the boys and deserved the same rights and respect. At the same time, I enjoyed being a girl because that's who I was, and it didn't detract from my character if I liked pink and hung animal posters in my room. I always felt that Princess Leia would of had a similar childhood, had she lived in the 20th Century.

Children today don't know how to play; or at least the kids in my neighborhood don't. When they tell me that they are bored and I suggest that they use their imagination and the vast resources in the backyard, my sister and neighbors stare back at me with blank expressions. Most of the time they seem to be too caught up in TV/Nintendo or try too hard to be much older than they really are.

My sister's latest conversations revolve around getting her ears pierced and whether or not Andre likes her. She is going to have to do the boy-thing, clothes-thing, mom-thing, job-thing for most of her life. Now is the time that she should be having adventures on the jungle gym.

With graduation, bills, and my career situation staring me in the face, some days I wish I could go back to being Princess Leia and fight the bad guys and shoot my laser and jump a ramp into lightspeed. I know I can't, but at least in my youth I had the chance to explore galaxies and save the universe from the Dark Side. Unfortunately for the kids of today, the dark side is a lot darker than it has ever been. Children need their TV's turned off and to be shown the light of the outdoors and force of their own imagination. Society really does need them to save the world.

Thief

by Angela Brooks

Fill me with thoughts
That keep me from thinking
I'm lost in my head, my conscience is screaming...
Tension has got me tied in a knot
I with I had what they think I've got...

One Lap

by Mary L. Brown

The odor of chlorine hung in the humid air. Looking into the azure water was like gazing into a giant blue topaz. The strips on the bottom of the pool seemed to wriggle like long eels, Gina shivered. Her wet tank suit clung to her body radiating a nervous heat. Her instincts were telling her to run. Escape! Her fear of water raged. The instructor's voice snagged her attention.

"There's nothing to be afraid of. Take hold of the ladder and step into the pool. It's OK."

Gina's thoughts raced back to her first swimming lesson four years before. Her family was on a picnic in a wooded pasture on the banks of the Illinois River. The heat was blistering and wading in the cool water seemed like a good idea. Dean, Gina's brother, was paddling around suspended in a rubber inner tube that looked like an oversized licorice donut. Her father stood waist deep in the warm green water. he beckoned to Gina to join him. Ten year old Gina had already decided that there were huge biting fish or worse, snakes, in the murky green depths. She was sure it was better to stay in the ankle deep water. If anything posed a threat, she could escape in an instant.

Her father had other plans. His usual lack of patience, he took her in tow and proceeded with his version of swimming lesson number one. Between screaming, kicking, and scratching she proved that fear could outlast patience or persistence. Gina's mother pleaded with her father to stop scaring her, finally tipping the scale in Gina's favor. Gina exited the river faster than the speed of light.

It had never occurred to Gina that she would be required to pass a swimming test in order to graduate from high school. She was not the only one that had a fear of water. The class of forty girls was divided into three groups; those that could swim, those that could float, and those that gripped the edge of the pool with a death grip.

Gina slowly stepped down the rungs of the ladder one at a time. The cold water inched up her legs. She could feel everyone looking at her as she eased down into the pool. She had never been in water over her waist before, and she was surprised at the way the water seemed to push her up. She felt warmer in the water than above it. She thought of how cold it had seemed when she first entered the pool.

The first instructions were to put her face in the water and blow air out of her mouth. It made her face feel as if someone were tickling it. That wasn't so bad she thought. Next came the open your eyes under water and count the fingers routine. It took more effort to force her eyes open, but after a few minutes Gina was able to perform the task with ease. Looking up from the water into the lights, Gina could see little rainbows in the droplets of water suspended on her eyelashes. Forty-five minutes had passed quickly; Gina couldn't believe it. It was time to get out of the pool. As she started up the ladder her body felt like it weighed a ton. It was a strange feeling, something she had never experienced before.

The rest of the day Gina kept drifting back to her swim class experience. She knew it wouldn't remain as easy as it had been the first time, and that made her worry about what lay ahead. She knew there were no snakes or fish, no dark deep murky water to fear, but she still had to swim one full lap of the pool to pass the test, one lap to graduate.

Aim, Fire

by Mary Brown

The crack of the rifle shot pierced the air, and before the sound had disappeared the rats had vanished. Smoldering garbage offered up it's gassy odor and a haze of smoke hung like a damp blanket over the dump.

Like most small towns in the mid 1940's, Ottawa had a dump near the city limits. The smell permeated the valley on misty windless days, and it seemed to feed on itself like a fire-breathing dragon in a restful sleep.

Back then, guns were not considered a threat; people knew how to use them, and target shooting was a measure of skill, not power. A target was anything from a rat to a paper with a printed bulls eye (if you could afford to buy them). The city dump was a shooter's delight, a natural rifle range with moving targets everywhere.

I was Daddy's girl, and at the age of 10 everywhere he went I would go. This presented a problem for my older brother. It was almost impossible to escape my interference in his life. I challenged him constantly, and shooting rats was the ultimate test of my skill.

On this particular day we were tied, two out of three rounds, and I had the tie-breaking shot left. The last cartridge clicked as it entered the breach of my rifle. I picked my target, took a deep breath and held it. Pushing the rifle butt tight into my shoulder, I searched for the trigger.

My finger slid into the gentle curve and tightened. I squeezed, releasing my final cartridge from the chamber. The rat, ignoring the attempt on his life, continued to forage in the foul smelling rubbish.

The hiss of the hydraulic hoses, as the heavy metal packer compressed the hopper of plastic trash bags refocuses my attention on the present. The recollection of shooting rats in our youth has sharpened my awareness of how different we have become. At some point in our youth we ventured into life with entirely different philosophies. My brother and I share the same planet and the same bloodlines, but that is where it ends. We are as opposite as Princess Di and the Bog man. I am a woman of many words, Russ is a man of few. I find everything interesting and challenging, art, music, history, nature, computers, cooking, new age, old age, and the present age. Russ however worked at the same factory for 34 years, never reading a book after leaving high school. He vacations with the same guys, at the same place, at the same time every year. He never married, never had a mortgage, and never left home.

When we talk, we speak the same language, but we lack depth and feeling. It's more like a casual conversation with a stranger in a grocery check out line. The thought leaves me saddened, with a feeling of being cheated of something I can't even describe. I long to return to the days of rats and rifles, conflict and competition.

Creating God

by Joseph Burza

If there is no God in the infinite heavens,
I will create one.
I will do so devoting
All my life,
All my soul,
All my essence to the task.
And should time swallow me
before this accomplishment,
other men would willingly be pressed
to continue my divine quest.
My desperate need for the existence of a
superior
would be praised by holy men of our day.
Even these men however would deem me
"misguided"
or worse, if they could peer into my reasoning;
for
---I'd create God, only to thank Him.
I'd not sing lyrics of thanksgiving for
the earth, nor its sky,
its vast landscapes, its waters,
its moon, its seasons, its days, its nights,
its many creatures; nor my life before me,
or its memories behind.
These wonderful puzzle pieces which interlock
to form
my world are beautiful in all aspects; and
any thinking creature would express
undying gratitude to their magnanimous creator.
But these "life's treasures"
I would barely mention to God,
because they all pale by the final part,
the one which breathes life into the entire
image!
It's this fragile fragment which removes the
mystery
and gives all else anticipated meaning.
It is only this piece for which I'd create God--

---I'd create God, only to thank Him for you

Henry the Happy Pornographer

by J. A. Carroll

Forty and grizzled, he saunters
In his timeless gray fedora, on the grimy streets
Of bohemian Paris--1931.
Surrounded by magicians, clowns,
contortionists, freaks,
He wades through a sea
Of nude bodies painted electric blue.
It is Mardi Gras.
He is Henry Miller.
Forty and balding, he stands
In a wrinkled shirt, sleeves rolled to the elbow,
With crooked suspenders and rumpled trousers.
Disgruntled, disheveled, with
Cigarette in hand, through wire-rimmed glasses
He peers in consternation
At his nemesis,
A typewriter.
He is writing
A book that will change the world
In the face of writers' block.
"For me," he said, "the book is the man
that I am.
"The confused man,
"The negligent man,
"The reckless man,
"The lusty,
"Obscene,
"Boisterous,
"Thoughtful
"Scrupulous,
"Lying,
"Diabolically truthful man that I am."
A walking anachronism,
This lecherous pornographer with the soul of a
poet,
This goatish orgiast with a heart of gold.
An American embarrassment, dubbed
"THE MASTER OF THE DIRTY WORD"
"The profanity was revolutionary,
US outrage--incendiary.
Henry took it with a smile
The book
Was
A success

Pork Rinds
or
Why *Lord of the Flies* Should not be Required Reading

by J. A. Carroll

"Write a short paper...using all the vocabulary words..." As the substitute scrawled the instructions across the chalkboard, the class emitted a collective high-pitched buzz of indignation. The small, pink pig that roamed the wilds of the classroom squealed in anticipation and scurried away.

These are the instructions," the mousy substitute stage-whispered. "The teacher's instructions--not mine." Her eyes, behind coke-bottle lenses, darted from face to face in fear. "Not mine," she reiterated more strongly, almost blurted, and her voice cracked on the last word. Completely overwrought, she licked her suddenly parched lips and readied herself for quick flight to the classroom door.

The faces she gazed upon were the bland, mildly indignant faces of children long marooned on a desert isle, unaccustomed to submitting to any rule but their own. The children bristled at the prospect of submission now. Their leader, Mack, simpered in a far corner and his bland face was transformed into a caricature of malevolence. He drew a compass from his backpack. The point glistened under the fluorescent lights. "I want...I wand...porkrinds!" he screamed, with obvious delight.

The children, their baser natures emancipated, withdrew their own compasses and began to conga, half-crazed, around the hapless substitute. The little, pink pig presently reappeared and careened into the conga line full force. Though a dozen congaing little bodies brandishing deadly geometric instruments obscured the greenish fluorescent light, the substitute could discern the magic-marker war paint on the once bland, now maniacal faces. Even the little, pink pig was bedecked with red and black stripes. The leader, Mack, deserted the conga line and walked stealthily to his backpack. He removed a cellophane bag, smiled sardonically at the substitute, and sauntered back to the revelers. They tore open the cellophane greedily, hungrily, and when the substitute in her Pepto-Bismol pink sweater saw that they were devouring those white, worm-like *things*, her eyes bulged slightly behind the magnifying lenses. They looked to the children like old-fashioned telescopes. The mousy, overwrought substitute fainted.

After school, as he was sweeping the classroom floor, the janitor wondered briefly why it was littered with pork rinds

Feeling Good While Feeling Bad

by William T. Clarke

Relief perhaps
From having performed well
When bad boomed large:
Glad overcoming sad
Momentarily
Like airport spotlights
Beaming X's on black-flac nights
Or a sudden respite
Following a long bout of dry heaves,
I now know joy
In the midst of gloom
And the shade of death,
Yet I smile with comfort
From this short visit
With mirth.

Untitled #1

by William T. Clarke

Somewhere past suicide
But this side of Schenectady
Lie the suburbs of serendipity.
There the plaintive gong of pain
Is anesthetized from pink or blue
To rainbow hue,
And everyone in sight
Has paid his due.

expectations

by Dojna Corzine

imagine my thoughts at the dawn of your
learning
the cards I was holding and tables I'm turning
the gap in my reason was easier to bear
than all of the silence that's always my share

when we were real

by Dojna Corzine

eggshells snap in heaven's trash
where the kids of Venus crash
grown straight out of fertile ground
showing saints their way around
magic kept our back streets home
devils left us quite alone
freedom handed thicker stars
and immortality was ours

Untitled #1

by Mary Honore Coughlen

I want to feel the warmth of summer,
as I stand on the lip of this blasted season.
I want to lie in the sun-dappled gardens,
as cold air creeps through my clothing.
I want to feel the sweat slide down,
as I shudder when I've caught this chill.

Untitled #2

by Mary Honore Coughlen

Scarecrow trees throw boney arms
awaiting winter's occupation.
Around their feet their leaves have fallen,
like useless discarded clothing.

Untitled #3

by Mary Honore Coughlen

I heard the song of winter,
during its darkest slumber,
a haunting, chilling tune,
it invades the sleep I crave.

Forcing me to sit awake,
listening to the plaintive howl
of soul culled from the living.
My skin bristles as I feel the
chill touch of true dark.

Temptress Eyes

by Cutter

Heaven help the wayward soul
That happens on to you.
His heart will pound; and passions rise
As gazing into temptress eyes
All waking thought turns to the night
She tastes your white-hot lover's light.
He wrestles with dilemma
And ponders what to do.
To break the oath, his holy vow,
And rush to her somewhere, somehow?
Or shun the truth, avoid desire,
And flee the burning, lustful fire?
But madness has him all now'
He dreams of her each night.
He's felt her lips, caressed her hair;
He's kissed her skin in places where
He can't forget. He never will.
Your lure has him bound even still.
But over time the image dimmed
And faded from his dreams.
So much to lose and none to gain,
He would not cause his loved ones pain.
And, in facing up to passion's lies
In dearest's face saw temptress eyes.

Pronouncement Day

by Cutter

A child lies lone in silent fear
As harsh words tug and rip his ear,
And tell their tales of loss.
He gropes for words in hopeful prayer
To halt the madness, end despair,
And rid him of his cross.
So did this youngster live his life,
Uncertain if he'd feel the strife
His parents could impart.
To wonder for so many years
and fight back 'gainst the bitter tears,
Grew armor 'round his heart.
And when pronouncement day did come
His very soul grew coldly numb
And shriveled as to hide.
"No light of day shall pierce this shield,
No power shall one ever wield
To break these walls inside."
Then, later in the nighttime still,
With anger and a strengthened will,
He vowed to never cry.
The answer was so bright and clear:
Just never let another near
Enough to tell a lie.

Had I.....

by Cutter

Had I danced one
dance,
or held your hand
and walked
beneath the moon;
Had I touched your
heart
with mine one
time,
would you still be
leaving soon?
Had I gazed one
gaze
of truth and love,
or wiped away
your tears;

Had I heard your
pleas
to join as one,
would you stay
through coming
years?
Had I loved your
love
as though I should,
or bared to you my
soul;
Had I given you
my very best,
would you still
feel pressed to go?

Had I fought one
fight
within myself,
and beaten back
my pride;
Had I slayed the
beast
that hurts you so,
would you still
remain my bride?
Had I though one
thought
beyond my own,
or harkened to
your pain;

Had I kissed away
a tiring day,
would you then be
mine again?
Had I shed one tear
and let you near,
I'd be holding you
this night;
Had I one more life
to live again,

I would surely
love you right.

The Trick is This.....
by Cutter

The trick is this:
To capture,
yet not constrict;
To know,
yet not pry;
To desire,
yet not obsess;
To show myself,
yet not lie.
So given such constraints,
it's difficult to learn
the pathway to your heart.
Should the road be followed
ever so slow and sure;
or raced on from the start?
The slow path may be best;
'tis even, straight and smooth,
and obstacles are few.
But a measured pace could
turn your desire to dust,
which by breeze is blown askew.
And what of a pell-mell
rush toward your good grace?
The risk seems truly great
that such a tack will build
a wall in you and doom
this quest to unkind fate.
Again, the trick is this:
To tell you of your sparkle
yet no lose the light;
To touch your life with mine dear,
yet not cool desire;
To describe my dreams to you,
yet not grow apart;
And to speak these truths out loud,
yet not squelch your fire.

Can You Imagine?
by Cutter

Can you imagine the courage displayed
as I wondered of your love for me?
-Or was it frantic fear?
Can you fathom the steady mind required
as I wondered of another man?
-Or was it panic, dear?
No answer could I hear more clearly
than
the deafening shout of your silence,
which broke my heart in two.
No desert bare, nor ocean deep and black
could match my empty, darkened spirit
at the moment I lost you.
Now, in quiet desperation, but with
purpose and resolve, I will leave you
to your separate life.
For it might be better that you see a
world beyond just me, and in the end
discover you're my wife.

Vicious Circle
by Cutter

A vicious circle,
Such that its end spurs its obscene start,
Has rolled its fat and bloated form
Well past those of weakened heart
And has become the masses norm.
And in doing so,
The deathless beast has cracked, split and went
An unshakable foundation,
Which in decades past had lent
Stability to a once proud nation.
Look, and you will see
Sireless waifs in rags and squalor,
Desperate maidens, empty and shallow,
And pained youths with misplaced valor:
Hooded, tied, and facing gallows.
Still the culprit smiles
And the culprit smiles
And grows fatter with each turn
The snare is sprung, and set, then spring--
It seems we cannot learn;
And those that pay most dear are the young.

Fluff

by Chris Davis

have you seen my underwear
I cannot find it anywhere
I've searched bath and kitchen floor
I even looked behind the door

I wish you wouldn't move my clothes
and put them where, God only knows
I could find my things all right
If you'd just let them be at night

Why do you insist on cleaning
every day and every evening
Couldn't you just let thing be
Couldn't you be more like me

#7

by Chris Davis

Hey Go to Sleep Hey Get in Bed
I know that that's what she said
I cannot sleep I will no go
Mom says now but I say no
Can't she see I'm wide awake
To fall asleep would hours take
If she were me I know she'd see
I cannot stop my energy

Annie

by Karen A. Gorshe

Daddy told Annie he'd always be there
To chase away the monsters.
The monsters under the bed...
And in the closet...
And in the cellar.

Daddy Told Annie he'd always make things better,
Like skinned knees,
And Stings from bees
And fevers, and colds, and the flu
Daddy told Annie to always be nice,
To turn the other cheek,
To treat people right.

But Daddy died.

And then Annie's monsters were free to roam.
The monsters were in the streets,
And in the people she'd meet.
They were outside her house
And inside her soul.

Annie's pains were no longer cuts and bruises;

The pains were broken friendships, and lost
loves, and shattered dreams.

An even though Annie did everything right and treated
everyone nice,

The pain came.

And Daddy was gone.

The Night's Silent Sound

by Pat Erickson

HEART BEAT, HEART BEAT.
What a wonder! is my Heart Beat
Rhythmically flowing as I sleep,
Angels watching as I breathe,
soundlessly,
Consciousness descending deep,
I'm unaware of my...

HEART BEAT, HEART BEAT
Metered motion,
pulsing my life's blood ever onward,
Reaching each unique weave of my being.

ROLE MODEL

by Dan Ferguson

A dim hue successfully penetrated a wet, gray November sky and collected into a cone whose tip illuminated the golden helmet, spearheading a blur of navy blue as it hurled over the painted grass. A resounding crash caromed off the golden dome at the center of Notre Dame's campus as the mass of flesh and plastic collided with its target and slid across the field leaving a wake of mud and turf. From beneath the pile of men rose the initial punished. He stood six feet and seven inches above his prey. Indifferent to the gala eruption projected by a multi-colored, beclouded plain of supporters, the golden knight's wide piercing eyes blazed through his mud-caked grimace. His fading, soiled jersey succumbed to split at the shoulder seams, surrendering to the gladiator's massively swollen biceps. Sweat carried blood from his enormous, scarred fists and dripped onto a saturated football field.

This warrior of the 100 yard arena was once a citizen of my home town. Reed Mollo has become legendary in the homes of its population. A product of the city's Catholic high school, Reed was the standard thrown at every sinful delinquent in town. Children could not name the Vice President of the United States, but they could spot Mr. Mollo at fifty yards. I, having attended the public school and never meeting Reed Mollo during our synchronized high school terms, assumed that "hero to thousands" fairly comprised the man. The summer following our freshman year of college, I discovered I was correct.

The first time I actually spoke with Reed, I was holding his long blond hair away from his mouth to keep him from spewing chunks of regurgitation into it. As he slinked off the toilet and onto the cool bathroom tiles, I warned, "Hey dude, if your going to pass out, don't lay on your back. You'll choke on your own hork."

An agonizing whisper barely crept past his lips, "I'm empty, bro. No more fuel for puking."

"Just in case why don't you roll over."

He didn't budge a muscle. If the situation were to arise again, I would leave the drunken fool and gamble that he had truly finished being sick, but I was still a disciple and convinced that this cud-encrusted man before me was humanity's greatest asset. I squeezed between Reed and the wall, grasped his thick shoulder, and utilizing every iota of strength I had and applying every law of physics I had ever learned, I began to roll him toward the toilet and onto his stomach. I almost had him high enough for gravity to take the baton when he finally moved on his own. The largest and fastest fist I had ever seen came hurling toward my face. I clinched my eyes as tightly as I could and anticipated the intense pain, but I felt only a quick, brisk breeze. However, the explosion of Reed's hand busting through the wall behind me was deafening. I have no theories as to how something so gigantic could have missed me. I stared at his arm hanging by the wrist from the crater and wondered how he could sleep in that position when the owner of the house/hostess of the party we were attending discovered the source of the atomic ruckus. I can understand how that sight alone might infect her with a great deal of anger, but I'm fairly sure it was her brief inquisition of Mollo which ended with Reed referring to the young lady as "cunt" that pushed her past sanity. There are certain words in our language that instigate strong emotion, but none prompts a more animated response that referring to an angry woman in the way Reed chose. The vision of the charming female charging at us with a cocked nail file solidified my analysis. After subduing Mollo's potential murderer, it was decided that Reed should go home and "sleep it off" and I, being framed as his cohort, was designated to drive him there.

Extremely annoyed that I had to subject my 1981 Citation's sleek plastic seats to a potential vomit plastering, I wrapped a towel around his neck and adjusted the seat as far back as it would go. Disappointed that it did not extend into the trunk, I helped the lummox into my car. I hoped he would sleep the entire ride, but I was denied peace. "Hey bro, sorry I tried to kill you, but you were rocking me back and forth. I'm Reed. Can I bum a smoke?"

"I only have one left."

"You're kinda pist, huh?"

"Yeah, Lenny! I'm pist! My plans tonight did not include carting around a slobbering drunk who only minutes ago attempted to put his hand through my skull. "Being designated the freak's baby-sitter did not appear on my agenda this evening!" The words flowed from my mouth too quickly for my brain to erect any sort of mental dam. I kept glancing at his tennis racket sized hand and wondering how badly it would hurt if I leaped from the car. Scrapped hands and knees far outweighed a deformed facial structure. As I crept my fingers toward the door handle, he said, "You are way too tense. You need to burn one."

He reached into the breast pocket of his T-shirt and removed a cigarette pack. He flipped open the top and revealed its sole contents, a long, round marijuana cigarette. "How about it?"

I hesitated. I had seen people get high, but I never partook. Nancy Regan's Hitleresque brainwashing had taken a deep root in my psyche. I still have "Just Say NO" flashbacks, and I was having one that night. " No man. All I need is my dad smelling cheeba on me or in my car. It's not worth death."

"We'll go to the park behind my house, and it's only one joint. Unless your old man has four legs and a snout, he's not going to smell anything."

".....Alright! Screw it! Where's the park?"

"Turn right at the next street. We're gunna get high!" He began singing a Cypres Hill song and rubbing the top of my head as I pulled over to the curb and doused my headlights.

Convincing me to Reed's supply of intoxication didn't require much effort. There is a specific excitement in doing things simply because they are forbidden. That thrill compounded by my curiosity concerning the source of such passionate preaching from both the pro and con sides pulled me toward the unlit picnic area. I watched Reed create a stumbling, dancing type stroll that can only be duplicated after shooting grain alcohol and must be accompanied by a slurred, yet loud, rendition of every song recorded in 1990. Reed's hoarse Ethyl Merman impression echoed up and down the block. "Hey Stupid! We're busted if you don't shut the hell up!"

"Don't call me stupid." Like someone flipped a switch he stopped singing and walked a straight line towards the picnic table. I started to feel guilty. With those few words I crushed his artificial Euphoria. I was aware of the nuveau-hippie treehuggers who labeled him "Stump" but I didn't know he was. Times like that I almost wish I was a woman. I don't mean that in any sort of transsexual way. Women are licensed to emotional consultation. Men, on the other hand, job up to the picnic table where the distraut companion is sitting, slap him on the shoulder and say, "So let's smoke it up."

As we inhaled the first breath of many, Reed began to recite the many advantages of cannabis to our country's welfare. The THC hadn't infected me enough to even be slightly interested, and I was tempted to ask him to save the speech. However, I assessed that revealing this wealth of fact was a sort of rebuttal to my terming him stupid, so I let him continue. I tuned him out while I contemplated the laws governing the sale of such tools as the one we were presently employing, an apparatus used solely to draw the nectar from alternate leaves. I picked up his dissertation near the end. ".....too much. In the 60's they just didn't know. Today we know about cholesterol, AIDS, the ozone layer, red meat, and multitudes of cancerous shit. Jesus, the damn sun can kill you. We just have too much working against our chances of longevity. Screw it! We're going to horde some pleasure before it all ends."

"Yeah." was the only response I could muster. I was what those who indulge on a regular basis have dubbed "skull baked". Reed began to roar with uncontrollable laughter at my handicapped state of mind. I found nothing even slightly humorous about my retarded brain function. For a moment I indulged in classic paranoia, convinced that my body would never again be in tune with my mind. As I reached the

edge of neurosis and prepared to fling myself into the abyss, I peeked Reed with his legs pulled into a crouch and his hands clutching his small intestine. He rolled back and forth on top of the table like a turtle in peril, and tears poured from his clinched eyelids. His high pitched cackle reverberated off the wooden canopy above us, and the vision of such relentless joy infested my psychotic state and overwhelmed any feelings of anxiety. I burst into a mimicked posture. We continued to laugh in more subdued tones for hours although nothing particularly funny occurred. My last recollection of the morning consisted of a glugging flask of Jack Daniel's burning the lining of my throat. My mind chooses to recall only unrelated flashes of images after that. Instead my memory attaches specific sensations to the remainder of that morning. Reed guided me into a comfortable, unassuming place where being silly was not only accepted but almost mandated. Those few hours remain the only time I have felt truly uninhibited and sincerely secure about my own eccentricities. I understand Eden..I associated that visit to Nirvana with Reed. Later the affection for that moment frightened me into never touching marijuana again. The biraging images of myself in rats standing on a squalid street corner attempting to sell oral sex for drug money were enough to set Timothy Leary straight. However, I kept my affinity for Reed, although it subsided a bit that next morning.

I awoke to two large fleshy paddles slapping the sides of my face. Such an arousal in the first conscious moments of the day generally results in sound thrashing of the slapping culprit, but my tormentor shadowed Goliath. I, without my slingshot, resolved to let it pass with simple whining, "What the hell, man! Piss off, bitch?"

He ceased his attack but continued chuckling, "Open your eyes waistoid."

As my vision sifted through the morning glaze sheeting my eyeballs, they focused on the steering wheel resting in my lap. I could see nothing through my windshield except the dingy, blue hood of the car, for mysterious forces, namely Intoxication, had left it propped open. The sunlight reflected off my key chain as it dangled from the ignition. It seemed the same gremlin had left my engine running all night. I am glad these demons decided not to go for a ride, but I wished I had discovered the scene they left me in before my giggling companion did. "Why don't you turn the car off, Mr. Doogwrench and come soak up the left over Jack in your system with some breakfast."

The ache rushed over my body as Reed slammed the hood closed. I hoisted my stiff carcass from the driver's seat and dragged my legs through the blades of the Mollo's green lawn. I feebly battled the solidified saliva that had been discarded into my mouth and vainly searched for the invisible man who persisted to whack me on the back of the head with a mallet. The noon sun pecked at my worn body like an old woman with an abundance of energy and a vast vocabulary. Finally reaching Mecca, I melted into a kitchen chair and absorbed what little comfort I could. I glanced up at Reed and noticed his garb. In addition to a head bane, he adorned himself in wrist and ankle weights, and he was drenched with sweat. I summoned enough strength to speak, "What, in the name of God have you been doing?"

"Jogging."

I re-inventoried my pain and recalled his condition the previous evening. In the closest thing to a scream that I could force from my throat, "You are insane! What are you? Bionic? I can't even crawl and you're running! Some satanic football coach forced you out of bed this morning and tied you to his bumper, didn't he? Holtz? Lou Holtz wants you running everyday, right?"

"I don't know. I never asked him."

"It's not for football?"

"No."

"Why in the hell?"

"It reminds me that man can be more than Nature will seemingly allow."

"A: you've had one too many buds and Nancy Regan was actually right or B: you've been practicing without a helmet again."

"Its' A. You caught me."

"Explain, Nature Boy."

"Well, it's starts in my lungs. They begin to feel really warm, and it's like every breathe rips at the insides of them like icy claws. Then my thighs begin to heat up until they're infested with a burn so deep that I think they're going to burst into flame. My calves begin to cramp up in mid-stride and I stretch out the knot with the following step. Almost every muscle burns and aches. Then it stops. Something lifts

me out of the pain. I feel calm and comfortable as I watch my legs churning beneath me without my consent, and I truly understand the separation of as well as the link between the human body and spirit. At the moment I begin to revel in the freedom from physical boundaries, I usually puke and keel over returning to the pain. I suppose that's Natures way to humble me. Holtz has nothing to do with any of it, nor do I want him to."

"But he's probably happy you're working so hard in the off season."

"Who cares?"

"You should. The man holds your future in his hands."

"I hold my future in my hands."

I couldn't understand how he expected to become an NFL caliber player without a coach. I attributed it to a great deal of confidence in his abilities.

A frosting coated breakfast sprang from the toaster. Reed slid them onto a plate and set them in front of me. He told me to "Eat up" and went into the basement to partake in a shower. I stared at the gelatinous, fruity goo filling the core of my tart and my stomach began to wretch. Quickly I scraped them into the trash. As I set the dish into the sink I heard the front door creak open. A portly lady in her mid-forties modeling a polyester floral blouse and heavily sprayed curly red hair stood in the foyer. She spun around after closing the door and kicked off her shoes. She jolted when she noticed me. "You scared me. Are you one of Reed's friends?"

"Yes, I'm..."

"Oh, well, I'm Reed's Aunt Bessie. His parents asked me to watch the house and make sure Reed has everything he needs while they're vacationing in the Florida Keys, a veritable hell on earth if you asked me. Did you know it's a hundred degrees down there today? No thanks, I'll stick with eighty-eight and a slight breeze. But they sound like they are enjoying themselves. I talked to them last night. The only thing is, Mr. Mollo has got a dandy of a sunburn, fell asleep on the beach. I swear that man could fall asleep in a subway at rush hour. But anyway, Mrs. Mollo's rubbing aloe on it, but I told her Noxema's the best cure. You shouldn't even mess with anything else. She'll learn when he's up all night crying in agony. Well what are you going to do? What did you say your name was?"

It is due to situations identical to this one that there should be federal mandate outlawing any home owner to possess accessible firearms, for if there had been any sort of weapon within my reach with the ability to exude deadly force, this tool of Lucifer known as Aunt Bessie would have taken a clip of bullets to the voice box.With every syllable my skull throbbed and sent bolts of electric pain to my temples prompting my eyeball to attempt an escape. I barely collected myself, "I have to ask Reed a question."

I plopped down the warped basement steps and entered the corner of the basement sectioned off with drywall which served as Reed's bedroom. Safely harbored from the jaws of Aunt Bessie, I relaxed on Reed's oversized bed. I began to unintentionally scan his cubical and my eyes fell upon an autographed photograph of Chris Zorich, former Notre Dame nosetackle. I shuffled toward the picture to inspect its authenticity. It read, "To Reed, a man who still knows football is a blast. Chris Z." Next to the mounted image stood a small faceless box encompassing ten neatly stacked books rested on a sheet of plywood supported on either side by cinder blocks. The spine of one book read, "The Sonnets of William Shakespeare:, another read, "Gridiron Guerrillas". A menagerie of subjects lay symmetrically on top of each other, everything from Jim McMahon to John Milton. On his desk lay open a notebook with half a page written. The top we labeled, "Tears of Zeus". My eyes began to follow the lines across the page when a voice bellowed in my ear, "Boo!"

Startled, I knocked over the metal folding chair which slid beneath the wooden sheet. "This day simply blows. I'm done. I give up. Everything annoying that could happen, has. I met your Aunt Bessie and lived to tell the tale should be printed on a T-shirt."

"Is that why your reading my journal? To forget your woes?"

"I didn't read it."

"I saw you. You're nailed."

"I was going to read it, but you came in too soon."

"Go ahead. Just don't read that one. It isn't finished.", he flipped through the book, "Here this one's done." He showed me a three page poem and sat on the edge of the bed awaiting a reading and a reaction.

The pounding in my head screamed, "We're in no shape to read three pages of some jock's poetry!"

I sensed that he was bestowing a gift upon me, a personal sharing that he didn't offer very often, and it would have been an insult to refuse it. The poem was told by a man who was speaking to a group of children. He assured the youth that they could become anything they desired, as long as they worked as hard as they could to achieve that goal. A boy jumped up and enthusiastically announced that he wanted to become a doctor. The boy smiled at the speaker, trusting the man's expertise and assured that he could in fact realize his dream, and the speaker looked into the boy's eyes and recognized the physical symptoms of Downs Syndrome. The rest of the poem deals with the speaker's loss for condolence. I actually felt something for these people who did not exist. That never happened to me before that poem. Granted, I didn't sit home sipping tea by the fire reading volumes of poetry, but I wasn't illiterate. Poems I had previously encountered seemed like work, and by the time I figured out what was being said, I didn't care anymore. Reed's was different. I didn't have to hunt it down, instead it came to me. I looked at the oaf sitting on the edge of the bed and wondered, "Who wrote this?"

"I did, bitch!"

"What class is it for? Your teacher's a genius."

"I'm not taking a class! Jesus, I'm not literally a stump."

"Well it's the best damn thing I've ever read."

"Thanks, man." He vaguely smiled and began dressing. "Hey dude, go home, sleep, and be ready at eight o'clock. Sheryl Taylor's throwing a kegger. I think Beth's going. Maybe you two can hook up tonight."

"What are you talking about?"

"I wasn't passed out all night. I saw you two given the nasty eyes. She wants you beneath her, bro."

"I didn't even know that her name was Taylor."

"Don't worry about it. I'll hook you up. I owe you for the ride home."

Perhaps it's the liquid jet streams steadily massaging my head and chest or the relentless pattering of water against the porcelain tub drowning the bustle of my house that creates an environment ideal for profound thought. Maybe the physical purity of being naked, alone and wet transforms the mind into a likened state. In this sanctuary I contemplated possible and probable futures, the intricate psyche of humankind, and , that night, the plight of Reed Mollo, crumbling hero.

As the shower head spat pulsating into my cloudy brain, I traced my steps through the last sixteen hours and attempted to lend conclusions to the secrets of Mr. Mollo. The man who I had placed in a realm of highest admiration and deepest envy was slipping into mediocrity. The pinnacle of male physique, a model of manhood shaming David was being chipped slowly into a sluggish lump of flesh and bone. The chisel and hammer came packed into the end of an apparatus known as a "bong". Of corse, the consequences would not be immediately visible, but I knew they would inevitably hinder his physical prowess. In a venue as attentive to strength and size as football, his decadence would surely be noticed. I manufactured a scenario wherein Reed failed a drug screen and was forced to resign from both the team and the university. I resolved that free hours should be spent overcoming his detrimental drug addiction instead of plastering his face into some less than vital book or scribbling into a diary. After thorough contemplation I discovered no angle where the construction of poetry would advance his opportunity to become a member of the National Football League. I also took into account the possibility of a blackballing by the Notre Dame coaching staff. Regardless of his ability to repress his foolish hobbies, the attitude he represented in the kitchen when referring to his head coach alone were enough to keep him from being drafted due to rumors of conflicts with authority figures. After tallying the revelations of the night my hopes for Reed dwindled to cafeteria ladle slinger. Reed had been instilled with powers that no other human possessed. He was not created to be a mortal man; he had been chosen for greatness. His life ascended to a grand station that most men would sacrifice anything to achieve, and a few men have while trying to be what Reed Mollo was without effort. This champion whose grandeur an entire community lived through had decided to deny his gifts and destroy the masterpiece that nature

had created, and it enraged me to the point of courageous stupidity. I refused to watch his gold be soiled; I would be the savior of Reed Mollo, if he didn't smash me in the process.

The digital clock on the VCR glowed 8:57 when a long, annoying beeping blared through the screen door. I stepped onto the front stoop staring at Reed in the driver's seat of a Corvette convertible and nodding his head in time with the song on the radio. His peripheral vision caught me as I approached the flawless machine, and he turned down the volume. "You like?", he asked with a post-trial-William Kennedy Smith grin on his mouth.

"If I get in am I going to the hoosgow? If so, let me get some more money. I hear bail for auto theft is fairly steep.

"I didn't steal it. I borrowed it.

"See ya!"I turned around with my hands in the air and headed back towards my front door.

"From my parents, jackass!" He chuckled as I hopped over the car door and landed in the passenger seat in perfect B-movie-renegade-cop style. Reed shook his head, "Pretty cheesy, man."

"Lay rubber partner! We don't have much time!"

"Jesus, read a book, huh."

I had planned to save my discussion with Reed for the end of the night, affording myself a final hurrah in case a fatal beating should occur, but I decided that being within running distance from my house appealed to my survival instinct. "So. What are you going to do after you graduate?"

"I'm not sure." With my first inquiry I was immediately thrown off by his response.

"What do you mean, you don't know'? You led N.D. in tackles last year as a freshman. I think it's safe to say that the NFL is interested.

"Maybe.

"No. They will want you.

"Maybe I don't them." My brain numbed. These words were unfathomable. He had won the forty million dollar jackpot and was refusing to claim his prize. Reed wasn't falling off the path; he was jumping from it.

"You're a fucking moron! You're purposely screwing up your life!"

"What are you flipping for? It isn't your business what I do. Who the hell do you think you are?"

"Someone who was cut from the team every year, mother fucker! Someone, who no matter how hard he tried, couldn't pretend to dream about holding a candle to you! Somebody who got fucked in the destiny department! You make me want to puke! Sometime why don't you check out why people ask you to tell them about the game! It's because they would kill members of their immediate family to be allowed to wear the uniform that you shit on! But no! The people who respect talent and natural ability are endowed with dick! You have immortality served to you on a silver platter and you spit on it! The question is, who the fuck do you think you are?!"

Reed's face turned to stone. He pulled the car to the curb, placed the gear shift into park, and turned the ignition toward himself. He opened the door, stood up from inside the car, and walked around the hood to my door. Through my cloud of fury I tried to decipher his actions until they became clear. He grabbed the portion of my shirt which covered my chest, lifted me out of the car and drove me into the sidewalk with his forearm. My back bounced of the cement, and I heard bones crack. Reed's eyes widened and bulged until they shadowed the rest of his face. The tendons in his neck snapped taut and shuddered violently. "Who the fuck do you think you're talking to, you flea!"

Terror in cahoots with anger lifted my shin with as much force as they could summon. Reed suddenly curled up in pain. I removed my leg from his groin and squeezed out from under him. Running on instinct, I sprinted toward the nearest house, and shimmied up a two story drainage pipe. I had just hoisted myself onto the roof when I heard the brackets fastening the pipe to the house snap like machine gun fire. I lay down on my stomach to peek over the edge, and surprisingly I experienced no pain. I watched Reed below gripping his hand in agony with the drainage vessel in pieces at his feet. The crackling bone was in Reed's hand, an old injury that had not been properly treated. He spotted the top of my head extending past the shingles, and after staring at me for a few seconds, he crouched onto the grass and rested his back against the house.

I nervously scanned the location of my roost. In doing so I not only discovered the home was located only two blocks from mine, but I recognized the house itself. The house I chose as my safe haven was planted amongst

about ten, and naturally it was the only one which was uninhabited. The Brook's old place had been vacant for months due to termite problems, according to my mother. Although any hopes of a owner noticing my footsteps above him or sneaking past my angry sentinel were extinguished, I still had faith in the gossiping, nosy neighbors who flourished in my neighborhood. Their curiosity would surely pull them toward my plight and, in turn, rescue me from the wrath of Mollo, so I waited. After a few minutes seeming like a few hours without so much as a crack in a set of the neighborhood blinds I resolved to scream like a girl at the top of my lungs and deal with the humiliation later. I filled my lungs with air and was about to let go of a horrified shriek when Reed spoke. "I'm sorry. Can I have a smoke?"

I dropped what he requested. His voice sounded passive, and I hoped that a peace offering would increase my life span. "Why don't you come down here. I said that I was sorry."

"Forget it! I haven't been to Hawaii yet."

"I'm not mad anymore. I realize that you weren't *trying* to hurt me, even though you did. To risk death like that, you must have been trying to tell me something pretty important."

"That you're wasting your life."

"Why? Because my life doesn't revolve around football?"

"Because you're gifted and don't give a damn."

"Gifted. I hate that word. One man's garbage is another man's treasure."

"Garbage! You stupid..."

"Imagine a baby born with a test tube grafted onto the palm of his hand, or one with a hard hat sewn into its sutures. A child branded with a specific occupation. The decision regarding the direction of its entire life is made before it breaches the womb. It's biologically absurd, but I am one of those helpless babies. I was fed at specific times and only certain foods. I was trained twice a day to dominate and destroy within the confines of a game, a game which I was meant to be a central part of. That was how I was meant to be, a polished game piece void of curiosity or the gaul to pursue that curiosity. I'm not allowed to be human. Well, it seems I experienced a malfunction and discovered that I have a mind that can make its own decisions. I discovered art and literature. These are the things which fill parts of me that football never knew existed. They take my imagination to places that a game can't reach. Best of all, I chose to read it. No one trained me to do it and then became angry when I decided it wasn't fun anymore, but everyone wants to take that away from me.. What are you so afraid of! Do you think that the sport will cease to exist if I don't strap on a helmet? Why do I have to sacrifice everything that's important to me in order to entertain you on Sunday? Why am I not allowed to be whoever I think I should be? Why is twenty-two men bumping into each other for sixty minutes more important than my humanity? Why does everyone I care about hate me?"

"They don't hate you. You do." He stared at me for a long time and then he dropped his head. He grasped his wounded hand, and slowly walked back to the car.

"I'm tired. I'm going to sleep. "He slumped in the driver's seat, drove to the end of the street, and made a U-turn. The only other time I spoke to Reed, we were smoking a cigarette on Sheryl Taylor's back porch during a Christmas party. We engaged in a five minute conversation consisting of commentary on the actual contents of eggnog. He seemed to avoid me, but that isn't to say that I was exceptionally outgoing either. I knew too many unpleasant realities concerning the characterization Reed Mollo and that made both of us feel awkward. However, still residing in the same town I involuntarily kept tabs on Reed's public activities. This spring he will graduate from the University of Notre Dame with a degree in Communications. He was drafted by the Seattle Seahawks in the second round and will attend training camp in July, I sometimes wonder if by not telling him to pursue his passions I ruined his life, for I get the feeling that I was the last person he revealed himself to. I speculate on the state of his life if he had quit football and become a poet, if he'd be happier, if we'd still be friends. Of coarse I, along with everyone else in his life, couldn't allow myself to encourage him, for everybody knows that little retarded boys can never grow to be doctors.

A second thought
by David Haynes

"An angel's face
a voice full of grace
the body of a princess."
sounds good
But I know what I've been told
I know they spoke true.
So I have to think twice
because I just met you.

Untitled #1
by Jeff Hicks

All and all
in the cubby hole I crawl
to escape the moonlight

One on one
I dance in the sun
in celebration of rejuvenation

Mental photosynthesis
growing and learning
learning and growing
growing and learning
on and on

Untitled #2
by Jeff Hicks

Katherine has let her hair down again
only for me
Katherine has let her guard down again
only for me
I drop my mason-built walls
only for her
I open my mind
only for her
The secrets we've shared
we dared, not cared
wishing our future
and knowing our past
To the end of our chapters we ride
until we close the book

Harmless
by Jeff Hicks

I have an obsession for you
    but not a bad one
I won't stalk you
    or call relentlessly on the phone
I just want to know you
    to talk to you
    to be your friend
Is that too much to ask?

Literate
by Jeff Hicks

I open to you
    as if a book
Turn my pages
    and read between the lines
My story lies just ahead.

Hmmmm.....
by Jeff Hicks

Objective objective
Unknown directive
Obtuse perspective
Very reflexive

A NONSENSICAL IDEA
by Jeff Hicks

I touch you
    but you don't feel me
I speak
    though you don't listen
I buy you dinner
    but it's not to your liking
You look
    yet only through me
I bring you flowers
    but your nose is too high to smell them
So I wonder
    are you suffering from nonsense?

Untitled #1

by doc holliday

like demons
they are a legion
all for one
one for all

millions of dollars for no
reason
hidden behind
a 10 foot wall

cover-ups of great proportion
federally
secured

fabricated stories
of mind distortion
is the truth
being obscured

left behind
throw away
with parachutes
of steel

have no mind
to remember
have no soul
to feel

this one committed
the ultimate
sin

he didn't
see our
way

give him
now
the iron
mask
lock
this
man
a w a y

Twelve Past Midnight

by doc holliday

no moon
nowhere to go
scared like shit
and i don t know

fallen to my knees
the cold goes to the bone
civilization far from here
i begin to call this home

haven't yet decided
to give up or to give in
it's twelve past midnight
and i'm back where i began

the choice was all mine
but it came as a surprise
twelve past midnight came
and it came to my demise

twelve past midnight
was when i had to go
didn't think the time was
right
but i didn t really know

the suicide solution
doesn't t really solve much
everybody thinks it does
but they really don t know
much

i should know
i m the unliving proof
now i m six feet under
after falling from a roof

my body's here
but my mind is too
mortal self's put to rest
and my spirit is confused

do i go now
or do i stay
there's nothing left to do
and there's no one to lead the
way

the choice was all mine
but it came as a surprise
twelve past midnight came
and it came to my demise

twelve past midnight
was when i had to go

didn't t think the time was
right
but i didn't t really know

and now i have decided
to give up or to give in
twelve past midnight
guide is here
to return to where i began

what's after this
i really do not know
guess it s time to find out
cuz it s time for me to go

twelve past midnight
was when i had to go
didn't t think the time was
right
but i really didn't t know

the choice was all mine
but it came as a surprise
twelve past midnight came
and it came to my
demise

SILHOUETTE OF GRAY

by Robin R. Kintz

Fear is a silhouette of gray
It smothers one in sweat
Fear like sweat...stings the eyes
bitter is the taste
Sounding off as your heartbeat
drumming in your ears
The shadowy feeling as if lasting forever
creates nervous hesitancy

AGE OLD HUNT

by Robin R. Kintz

Varied tongues of flame linger
then effortlessly slip away
between dark ominous trees...ages old
Sleek shadows cover ground briskly
serenely searching in the full moons
uncomforting light
Once the prey is found serenity disappears
it is replaced with a hot-blooded intent to live
No help given No favor asked No fair play
known
It is the fast paced game of survival
A deep throated howl runs amongst the forest
Quicker than the luminous moons ebbing light
aggressors multiply answering calls echo
adding to an age old song...the song of the
summoned pack
The intense chase quickens becoming inflamed
anxiousness and fear
The fearful alone outnumbered by the
anxious
...eagerly following their hunting trail...ages old
The hunger determines The battle merges
With the rise of an ignorant dawn the fading
traces are left-
A story to be told
A portrayal of the quick paced strategy
to sustain life
by both the hunter and the hunted

AS I LIE IN WAIT

by Robin R. Kintz

As I lie in wait
memories play,
centered in my mind.

The cool scented breeze weakens
and the drapes fall-- to rest quietly.

Restless as the shadows
cast throughout...
I rise and walk
into the moon's silver sheen.

Disregarding my sleepy state,
I blankly gaze into the shroud of night...
perceiving nothing.

As loneliness itself chants
within the rhythm of my soul...
leaving me empty, aching for you.

THE REALM OF SELF TRUTH

by Robin R.Kintz

An ancient soul flows within your blood
Riddled within your eclipsed mind
demons devour your conscience
demons spoken of by calmer names
For this your blood flows not as boldly
To see only the outline of anything
you will see nothing
...in this blindness anything becomes
unattainable
Living of the world but not in it
you shall take on a certain look
one who is spoken for
...it is then that you truly shall be where you
belong
Believing the rest a mere decoy
Finding that part of being
..which will never be undone
you shall envision a new realm
coming home to your self truth

MIDNIGHT FREIGHT

by Robin R. Kintz

Crickets chanting outside my window,
ease me to sleep.
Every night at midnight
I awaken to the whistle's pitch
a scream-drowning out the stillness.
Tracing the predestined track
hot, steel wheels upon cool, moonlit rails,
a thousand miles and more...
the freights familiar clatter
the rhythm distinct over distance.
Again, the whistle warns
the wind carries the cry...
diminished now with flight.
The chanting outside once again
murmurs me to sleep...

RESUSCITATION

by Robin R. Kintz

Grazing my palm
by fingertip
my attentions gripped
by his gaze.
Our heartfelt intentions
simultaneous.
Lifting his hand
to caress softly my pulse
he draws ever so near
arms enfolding me
... within them not a thing will I deny.
Prowess coyly fighting
to falter
ever so silent
his soft mouth envelopes mine.
Awakened passions impulse
left abandoned, now cast--
into dreamy desire.
Touching emotions entwined
lingering upon memory's lane.
Bodies tight
so smoothly strenuous
rhythm upon rhythm in time...
tears cast upon us
I cry.
Smothered in kisses-- his reply

Romance

by Robin R. Kintz

A full moon
A lofty breeze
Two fading shadows
against the trees
The forest dim
A beach bright
The feeling true
The moment right
The quickened pace
A silent hush
Love's understanding
A sudden rush

Libido

by Robin R. Kintz

The genuine smile
caress of hunger
enlightening laughter
there's a need for more
Dreams of our future
reminiscing our past
passion with endeavor
a kiss that shall last
A voice of desire
ice within a flame
encompassing and lingering
too wild to tame
Clinging memories
of smiles- of laughter
passionate hunger
desire for more
Dreams of hope
faithful trust
once again
in wait for us
Let us remember
and remain
forever young
within love's flame

RESTLESS LOANER

by Robin R. Kintz

I talk to none, I'm let be
I keep to myself, single- carefree
I go my own way alone...unseen
I am no fool better let me be
I need no friend or love you see
cause all it'll do is weaken me
Nothing gets me down no more
for to my heart I've closed the door
I'm sick of hurting deep inside
tired of feelings I've had to hide
I've left a place I once called home
now I'm slowly walking some road alone
I think of the reasons and try to find
a way to forget to leave it all behind
As I walk my mind is led astray
to the past of my younger day
The city, country and untamed wild
I had seen from the eyes of a child
But age and the onslaught of fresh trouble
keeps me roaming strong though I stumble...
Weary from travel with a hunger that's grown
decisions in deaths face made alone
Though the walk wearies the steps are light
eagerly I look toward the restful night
When my dawn breaks the cold chills sting
I'll feel once again the sunshine gently flooding
Again I shall walk toward a place unknown
single, unnoticed- but not alone
With every step I see life stir
remembering things the way they were
I hope, I wish, I dream and then...
trace back my steps to you again
Taking control, this reality brings me
to what I was- just as you see
A restless soul with love to find
the only one...of any kind.

Untitled #1

by Angela Knezevich

Those sad eyes see only a shade of gray.
The sunlight never beaming down on your face.
The white powdery clouds forming nothing but storms for you.
You never see the color I do-only gray.
Gray that covers the smiles and happiness of tomorrow.
Gray that lets in the frowns of sadness and yesterdays.
Let me paint you a rainbow..
A rainbow of the most brilliant colors imaginable.
Maybe your clouds will move.
and the sun will come out.
And- just maybe- I'll see you smile for me.

Untitled #2

by Angela Knezevich

I was alive for a night.
There was no moon.
There was no breeze.
The darkness enveloped me and
I thrived on it.
Then the sun came up.
It scorched my soul-
and then I died.

My Bad Influence

by Angela Knezevich

You rid me of the morals I pride myself on.
You are the lost soul that drifts in and out of me
Look at me.
What have I become?
I do believe I'm turning into you.
Problems follow me, and trouble is always there.
Why insist on corruption?
I kind of liked me once.

Lip

by Angela Knezevich

I could touch your face
I would feel your lips
but I won't your so faraway
In a dream
In a movie
It doesn't matter
It won't change
to see me here
would you laugh?
cry a tear of touching you?
could I have a hand
a kiss on the cheek
to say maybe
could be
should be
feels right feels to me
real love through a reel
on the page I won't cry
just pretend and conceal
a piece of me
given to thee

My Friend

by Diane Kollman '95

Would you hold my hand tightly my friend.....
Would you give me your support and warmth my friend.....
Would you give me your love and understanding.....
Or would you just get up and walk away.....

What I have to tell you is not pretty...,
It does not consist of white clouds and blue skies.....
It is full of black holes and a lot of grayness.....
'Cause I just found out early last week.....
That I am dying of the virus AIDS.....

Would you still hold my hand tightly my friend.....
Will you still give me your support and warmth my friend.....
Will you still give me your love and understanding my friend.....
Or I am still the same person I always was.....
Or will you just get up and walk away.....

Snow Blind

by Rick L.

As I look across the yard,
I see nothing but white.
The sun's blazing light
shining down,
casting a blinding, reflective
glare.
but if you look harder,
there's more than you think.

The tree's black boughs
are now fossilized in thin icy
sheaths.
As the sun peeks through
them
they are no longer wood,
but glass.

Icicles dangle and drip,
like stalactites in a misty
cavern.
The sky is as white as the
snow,
and the winds are chilled to
arctic standards.

Children run and play.
Snow angels appear in the
soft, white powder
snowballs hurl like shooting
stars.

As I look across the yard,
I see much more than just
white
and blinding glares.
I see the beauty of winter,
and I'11 remember it always.

But...

by Rick L.

"You're a really great guy."
"You're a lot of fun to be around."
"I love your sense of humor."
"But...I just wanna be friends."
"Try to understand."
"I wish it could be different,
but...I just don't think of you that way."
"I value our friendship too much
to have a relationship with you."
"I'm sure we could work,
but...what if we didn't?"
"I just don't want our friendship to suffer."
"Do you understand?"
"Good, that's what I like about you."
"You're so understanding."
"What's that?"
"Sure I can take you home now."
"Are you sure you're OK with this?"
"Can I have a hug?"

You could but...
I may start to cry.

Uninhibited

by Rick L.

Softly you touch my lips.
I inhale your sweet breath.
I hold you inside.
I try not to let go.
Again and again we make contact.
Until my emotions run free,
and my inhibitions are faded.
This is what you do to me
This is why I come back.
I live for your kiss.
'Cause you make me feel free

Prescription for Religion

by Rick L.

Take one dose, once a week,
(more doses are welcomed if needed) ,
for spiritual healing, cleansing of the soul,
and acceptance to eternal rest in a higher place.
However, beware of side effects!
Corruption of mind.
Development of beliefs that are not your own,
which may lead to loss of individual thought.
In individual cases, loss of money,
due to the addictive tendencies of the drug.
Development of false senses of trust
in nonexistent sources of guidance.
This drug does not affect all people the
same way.
Please make sure, if you decide to pursue use
of any form of this drug,
that it is the proper type for your person.
Avoid cheap imitations.

Pals

by Rick L.

The closest of pals,
that's what we are.
Whenever they see you,
they know I'm not far.
We're like Calvin and Hobbes,
with the havoc we wreak.
Our mischief is constant,
eight days a week.
We hit on the same girls,
always a smile,
cause like Beavis and Butthead,
we do it with style.
We like the same music.
We rock and we thrash,
And whenever there's a pit,
we're in kickin' ass.
Overall, bud,
you're my truest friend.
'Cause like Fred and Barney,
we're pals to the end.

Love

by Laczynski

Simply stated I could not find what meant most to me.
I had cared for it with intimacy and still it went away from me.
I could not understand why it would go
Like an arrow from Cupid's bow.
I smiled, cried and did all that it asked.
Humbled myself and spiritually knelt.
I never knew until the end that it was masked.
"It's lost! It's lost!" when shall this agony stop being felt?
When the last salt tear was cast
And I was resolved to accept
With a farewell in my throat and a sigh from reject
So sure that this broken heart would never mend
When who should happen to call, but an old friend who could lend hand.
And Cupid's arrow shot my lover dead!

Fallen Angel

by Laczynski

An angelic face with blue twilight in his eyes
Blond hair falling like the sea surrounds his shoulders
A halo of faint light around his head
Evil grin on his face
Stains of red taint the skin
He tells me to get closer
A promise of death in his eyes
Am I to be used for his pleasure?
He's flooded with searing light
And passionate, glorious hate
I watch as countless souls drink it in
Affecting their minds... bodies
He projects
They absorb
It never stops
Not even after death
Take the knife
Never stop
Like sweet honey that runs forever
And makes you sick
After it's too late

FOREVER DOESN'T HAPPEN

by Laczynski

She's calling his name
But he doesn't hear her
And she wants him to lift her up to the sky
Where they can get high off of each other.
She's always telling him something like that
He doesn't want her anymore
Not even to hold on to
And he tells her this
But she never listens
Just like he never listens anymore
She asks him to hold still
So she can stare into his green eyes
And run her fingers through his black hair
He tries to believe in the feelings
But he knows they're never coming back
She wants to look at the stars with him
He wants to spend the night alone
He tells her "We can't keep pretending anymore."
She tells him "Everything will be fine."
He doesn't want her anymore
Not even to hold on to... And he tells her this
But she never listens
Just like he never listens anymore
He tells her the end is near
She tells him to be careful... the sky is falling.

An Apple Tree
by Amy Lingafelter

Tonight we sit and make a meal
out of stale, dry cereal,
small apples and cold drinks.

We listen to sad songs.
I blush at something you say.
I try so hard to match you,
licking your chest and stomach and thighs,
You are too quick.

I don't Fly like fairies
so you try to launch me.
I am too heavy, and, without wings,
I don't set Car.

And we sit with our meal
as the molten world passes,
so self-involved and eager to invade
and I say "who cares", but maybe you do.
But now I feel stupid
We are competing with black ghosts.
How many plain-faced people hold hands
and think they 'love like no one else?
Too many, I say.

But now our meal has grown hot
and your eyes pierce the apples.
I am confused about you,
but I don't let it show.

This nudity is frustrating.
I see plain-faced, no-name
all around us.
Convince me convince me.

You say, "No hard thoughts.
soft kissing, violent touching."
I will grow an apple tree in your
backyard so we can always have meals like this.

Moses
by Amy Lingafelter

Uh...well , we thought someone
should tell you this, we drew straws,
and uh...wouldn't you guess -- it had to be me. I
better get started.

Well, you remember when
Queen Tut or whoever
pushed baby Noses
or whoever down the stream
to save his life because
Yul Brenner or whoever was killing
all the first sons in Iraq or wherever?

Yeah...well, to us, you are,
figuratively speaking.
Baby Moses , and we are Queen Tut.
It's time for you to go.

I guess this is like the mama bird.
You know, trying to get the baby bird to fly.

Yeah...well. we are trying to tell you to go now.
You have to fly.
Float away little Noses.
Change your sticks into snakes
or whatever it is you do with
those hoodlum friends of yours.
Forget about the world market.
Thumb your way across the country,
and then settle down and talk of
your Kerouac-ian years.
Have children and buy them toys.
Tell them that Catholicism
is definitely NOT a lifestyle.
Wash their faces with your spit.
Suppose your toes are roses.

Well... I don't want you
to hate me little Moses.
Merely know your limits
and be afraid when it counts.
And find your own damn health insurance!
You're 19 years old now.
Leave us the hell alone.
Happy sailing.

Footless
by Amy Lingafelter

Eating spaghetti
and all the wrong words, I think
he's also swallowed his foot.
Small windows are useless,
no matter what for.
Go fetch me the ax.
We'll turn it into a door.
A little door ("little", of course, endearingly used)
and twice in one night I've turned breathless and blue
looking out my door, wondering why
he fell broken down when I willed him to fly.
He DID need that foot
in some fashionable way.
He needed that foot in flight lessons today.
He's dead footless now,
hanging out my new door.
and I don't really miss him any more.

PeArl
by Amy Lingafelter

A big red "A" across my sun-dress,
but I was attempting to rear the devil's child.
I tried to seduce him, but *I* wasn't his type.
I wanted his baby so no one could blame me.
I wanted to feel him fill me up.
"Not my type...not soon enough"
and he was laughing.
Almost the Homecoming Queen
and he was laughing.
Almost made it big with a famous daddy.
You poor kid,
You mean your father is THE Devil?
THE Devil?
Yes. you'd reply.
I have the dysfunctional scars to prove it.
The talk shows are calling
Everyone wants you.
but who do you know now?
Poor kid, stuck here now with a no where mama.
Another virgin birth since Satan wouldn't have me.

Those Groan-down Christmas Means
by Nancy Lockhart

Santa Claus don't come no more.
He doesn't bring me pink organdy dolls with
Real hair.
He don't hold me in his lap and
Let ms feel his spun glass whiskers,

Christmas means dirty snow Santa Claus lies
And looking at poverty through a View Master
Parties where silver ladies in push-up bras
French kiss the whole executive department,
Christmas means.
Too much punch and puking on the neighbor's
Red fur toilet seat cover.
Hot feet in vinyl boots in crowded stores
which send customers to customer convenience
For boxes to bald presents bought on Master Charge
That nobody likes anyway,
Daddy's drunk most of the time,
Mother's dead, so she don't care,
And Santa Claus don't come no more.

All My Friends
by Nancy Lockhart

All my friends came to the concert
I gave in the shower,
All my friends loved the words to my song,
Words I wrote with a pencil that had no point,
Which I found in a pocket full of holes.
All my friends ate the cake that I baked
From a recipe of Marie Antionette's
Made of sponge.
All my friends raved about the mohair sweater
I wore the one knitted
The year my daddy shot the mo.
All my friends wished to applaud me,
But time was all over
Their hands,
So, instead, they all batted their eyes
Rapidly enough to create a wind
Which took me across the room.
There they bound me in garlands
Of forget-me-knots.

Lunar Eclipse

by Nancy Lockhart

The moon died this
morning.
I watched it ebb
into a coma.
I attended its wake,

The moon turned
into a cinnamon
sky-cookie;
A balloon with a
broken string
Going brown with
pollution.
Today the moon
yawned itself
Inside-out.
A cosmonaut tossed
an astronaut
A frisbee across the
face of the moon.

I saw the moon roll
back
Into its mother's
womb,
And I noticed a
jumping cow's utter
frustration,
I witnessed a
unilateral castration
Of the man in the
moon.

I spied a mouse
slicing the moon
To make a green
cheese and Jelly
sandwich,

The moon was a
silver dollar today
Which God slipped
into his pocket.

The Truth is too True for you

by Allen Markus

Only a bit of thrush on a bush
To make a smile go to the grave
or a baby swing in a chair
on a bed of circles or squares
to make a cry for condemned souls

that reject the love of a higher power
"yes please"
is what they say
"I want a second of heaven
for an eternity in Hell"

Jon's Birth Day

4-4-76

By Rhonda Muir

--Tension builds as the day approaches
Anxiety crawls over my skin.
With dread, nausea
Pounding heart, and flooded eyes,
I await the hour.

--There's no escape.
The pain will come again.
And I will embrace it,
Move into it, Only-
This time I won't birth a son

--This pain,
This laborious grief,
Will birth another-
Me
Alone.

--Remembering the day
his Death
Ended the family celebration
That used to measure his life
On this day.

--I will embrace this pain also,
Move into it,
And Remember-
Life is eternal.

RAGING TEARS

(In memory of Jonathan Lee Muir
My loved and loving son.)

By Rhonda Muir

Rapid and harsh,
The tears rage from my eyes,
As with knuckled white hands
I labor my head in the void called
Grief.
I sit and stare
At nothing,
Unable to look away at... something.
This empty, bleeding hole in me,
Anguished.
Tormenting silence
Offers no comfort, but rather,
Starkly points to my loss, mercilessly.
Belting the wound with memories of
Hope dead.
Mind whirling, reeling,
As if in a dance with death,
I lie on my bed, seeking sleep's solace.
Thoughts of what might have been, but
Never will be.
Sleep came - for a while-
Only causing me to awaken once more
To raging tears at the terrible silence.
The silence which cries out, unceasingly,

He's gone.

A Love Poem

by Nadine

The feeling of warmth and wanted-ness
The feeling of sheer desire.
The touch of lust
that leaves no scar.
Love is strange in how it works.
What it does, seems like love
not-at-all.

But that feeling,
which surpasses
any other found
causes us to question that
Feeling of not-at-all,
by trying to make it feel
that much more.

An Occasional Beheading

by Tracy Panepinto

An occasional beheading is good for the soul. Admittedly though, it's not for everyone. The blood and the mess do not agree with the weak-hearted. Others may see the emotional torment as an agony beyond endurance. Only on exceedingly rare occasions are beheadings conducted in the quick, painless and humane manner promised. More often it is a drawn out, gruesome, gut wrenching ordeal. The ghastly deed is carried out slowly, by degrees. Each and every fiber has time to resist the separation, stretching and contorting in a vain attempt to keep the whole intact. Eventually though, the connections give way. The head thuds heavily on the ground. The awkwardly transformed body stumbles forward, then flounders around for a time in the pool of gore. For some this mutilation is a disturbing spectacle, especially when it is recognized as being self-inflicted. But for those who enjoy the occasional beheading, it is a liberating experience.

Although these decapitations are by choice, the victim/executor still goes through a very real horror at the prospect of having the head, the storehouse of experiences, ripped away from the body. To re-examine and learn from experience is a doctrine of society. No one has a desire to repeat past mistakes. Yet too often this caution binds one to a past that is no longer relevant. Experience can be the reason for failing to explore familiar situations in new ways. The body, when relieved of this burden, is free to pursue previously unknowable insights in its day to day life.

There is also likely to be a good deal of disorientation upon the initial loss of the head. Life is not perceived in the same way. Perspective must change. Gone are the faculties which continually monitor the outside world; consequently, outside influences take on less priority. Inner senses now become the guiding force of the transfigured body.

The more they are used the more sensitive and accurate they become. Not surprisingly, they have wisdom of their own. This wisdom differs greatly from the experiences of the head. It is not based on the equations of logic and reason, nor on input from the outside world. It is unconcerned with conformity. It is the knowledge of one's inner nature. Some consider it the conscience--others, the soul. Whatever the name, it is an honest indicator of the needs of the self.

Unfortunately, a beheading is frequently not permanent. It may be necessary to repeat the procedure after a period of time. Often the body has no choice but to live in its same old environment. Even with its new perspective, it may be subject to the same stimuli that shaped its last head. Sometimes these elements overpower the body's self-contained wisdom and cause the regeneration of a new head. Perhaps even a duplicate of the first. Oddly enough, this can happen without the body's knowledge. It will then gradually turn away from its wisdom of the self and return to functioning in accordance with external influences. Luckily there are many mirrors that the body routinely encounters. It has the chance to see itself and recognize what has happened. Then hopefully, another beheading will commence.

Answerless

by Jennifer Partin

You tell me
I am your world
I worry about the pollution.
As I am your stars, sun, moon
the light is dim--
In your romantic attempts,
you compare me to a
summer's day.

My eye's melt from the
humidity
bring raining tears of
spring.
As I am your air,
I strain not to cough-
You tell me
I am your reason, your
everything

Why do you so often tell me
how much life sucks?
As I am you sight,
do I fall from
blindness--
As I am your ears,
does the screaming
ever end--

Untitled #1
by Chris Phaby

Chopping wood.
Constructing fire.
Huge stone temples.
Religion.
Humanity.
--- A silent eternity.

Untitled #2
by Chris Phaby

The coming of age in the
workplace.
Humor his direction,
interpret his aggression,
admire his air,
succeed his cares;
work with him. --- Daily

Untitled #3
by Chris Phaby

I'm the man
  when nobody's lookin'; tell
the Self
I was only jokin';
plenty of faces
  from the people I hate; like
someone pushin' buttons
controlling my fate.
I wanna fly;
No, I wanna die
Bury me in the ground
where I hide and won't be
found.
We've got plans
but nobody cares;
us against them
  is the ultimate affair;
tell them
  they're on their own; to you
only
my forest will be shown.

Untitled #4
by Chris Phaby

The American Woman--
  quick to resist'
  content and aware.
Do you wish
  to bear her child--
  or her burden?

Untitled #5
by Chris Phaby

I thirst for isolation,
plan no connection.
My enemies--
  they envy me in my
precious ways.
Feeling my fate slipping
away,
I mustn *'t* let it wander.
I enjoy the suspense of
nobody there,
and the absence of stare.
This must be me,
loneliness drives me:
Path unknown.
Stellar guidance,
I know the end is near
when nothing do I fear.

Untitled #6
by Chris Phaby

Man has his soul.
The soul,
  to fight
  to bite
    to conquer what told.
Deity has their own.
Their own,
  to flee
  to complete
    to ravel and unfold.

Untitled #7
by Chris Phaby

Triumphant is the Deity
who edits
    his kingdom successfully.
Defeated is the pharaoh
who consumes
    the light of the sparrow.
Foolish are the men
who resist
    the hand of Zen.
.Victorious is the Soul
     who responds
     to none but his own.

Untitled #8
by Chris Phaby

Look at the children!
          Look at them fill
their stomachs
          with cola and cotton
candy.
          Look at them cry in
terror
          at the masked
clowns.
Hear them laugh at nothing at
all.

Jim's Troubles

by Carolyn Schwenke

The troubles I have with women began in the sixth grade. I had no Idea what girls were for. They seemed to be boring to me. They stood in small groups and pointed at all of us guys. I didn't know what they were looking at. But in sixth grade I found out.

"Hi, Jim (giggle, giggle). Diane told me to tell you that she thinks you are cute and she wants you to read this note."

This puzzling statement and letter deliverer was Sherrie. She lived in my neighborhood and hung out with my younger sister Angie sometimes. I told her as politely as possible that I was not cute and handed the note back to her.

I felt guilty when Sherrie returned to the group of girls in the cafeteria. Diane's face was very red. She even looked like she might cry. I was in trouble. Every girl at her table gave me a nasty look. When Sherrie came over that afternoon to look at magazines with my sister she ignored me. She didn't even answer when I offered her cherry Kool-Aid. Until that day she had rushed into the kitchen whenever I made a pitcher. She could drink three or four glasses, finishing the pitcher and staining her mouth bright red.

I didn't really understand my mistake. I thought the only person I had insulted was myself. I told her I was undesirable. And I certainly did not want a girlfriend. All of the couples at my school seemed strange indeed, I observed boys and girls holding hands and walking to class. Yet they ignored each other: the girl always looked for her friends so she could exchange notes, and the guy looked uncomfortable until he saw a pal to high-five. I was *just* not into it.

Eventually the girls stopped giving me he's-cute-but-insensitive looks.

I had a few more middle school romantic possi-bilities, but I was still far more interested *in* drawing and reading adventure novels than I was in attracting girls.

When I began high school I started to understand the attraction of lovely young women. But when I approach-ed girls for dates and called them on the phone I was disappointed. I don't think either I or any of the girls I knew were ready for any serious understanding of each other. We were trophies and dated people who were attractive and popular.

Somewhere in my head I linked women with greatness and perfection. And although there certainly are great women all around, the perfection I thought they contained was very off with reality. I expected to become a man by attracting girls who would then love me forever and listen to me and do what I wanted, and not complain because I had a part time job, and have sex with me.

When I got into a relationship, neither of us could understand the difference between fantasy and reality. I think we were just naive and a little selfish. But I'm sure no one tells young people what to really expect from each other. In a way, that fact is O.K. We probably benefit more by making mistakes and doing it wrong than we would if someone just told us that relationships involved compromise and a sense of responsibility for our partner's feelings. So I was in trouble again as a selfish sixteen year-old.

I had started to study a lot with Sherrie. She was in most of my classes and had an ingratiating mix of serious brain power and goofy sarcasm that made homework interesting. Since we were together so much, our friends began to tease both of us about our "romantic love affair. I know I felt pressure to win her as my girlfriend, and I'm sure she felt the same

pressure. Of course our dates were boring nightmares. We were both trying so hard to impress each other with superficial images of how we thought we should be acting that we spoiled any true sparks we had. We were so self-confident that we lost the friendly fun that made us such a good pair.

After that she wasn't mad at me; she just ignored me. I was embarrassed about our failed relationship, certainly. And I guess since I didn't live up to her image of a perfect boyfriend, there was no use for our friendship, It would have been very difficult then for us to resume our original friendship, but I really wish I had. Or perhaps if we had waited another year or two before we decided to try romance it would have worked out and we'd probably still be together...

Anyway, the incident with Sherrie was not my first broken heart. It was more of a confusing crush that didn't work out. The real heartache was after my two year relationship with Ann. I definitely loved Ann. It was the most spectacular year, that first year we were together. We were both 21, Just starting our senior year of college in Milwaukee. Ann and I had met the previous year in a small history seminar. We even studied together a few times. But there weren't any major sparks, since she had a boyfriend and a demanding schedule. It was my first year on my own in an apartment and I was working, too,

But the next fall I spotted Ann in my apartment building.

"You live here now, Ann? How are you doing?" I asked. I realized how beautiful she was. The beauty may have come from an inner happiness. She had left her boyfriend to spend the summer traveling with a friend, When she explained the crazy road trip to me I was fascinated. Her attitude had seemed to change from that of a workaholic into a free spirit. When i told her I noticed a change, she laughed.

"I've always been like this, Jim. I just needed to make a new start. I needed a fresh look at things and a brief escape from school and work. I guess it did change me, though; I took the trip for myself and it worked out great."

We talked for hours about our futures and pasts and college and young adults. We hung out in each other's apartments whenever we needed a study break and basically just got along great the entire year. We even took a mini-road-trip during spring break. We drove all night to New York and stayed awake as long as we could by drinking coffee. She was great.

At the end of the year we decided to move to Chicago together after both finding jobs in the city. I guess college was some type of unreal situation. For some reason the relationship stopped working. We argued every day. It just ended like that. I don't understand; surprisingly I don't love her anymore.

I was at a bar last night. I was wondering whether I should have ever bothered to get involved with women. I was wondering why it never works, when this charming woman bought me a beer. I stopped wondering.

DENOUEMENT (13)
by Manuel Tamayo

What gives you the right to question my mind?
Far away from this moment in time
I'm here...Again
Waiting in darkness for them.
I am in silence and they never suspect
the coming of the storm with dangerous intent.
Their faces freeze at the sight of my shoes
when they realize all there is to lose.
Then my smile that sends chills down their spine
with thoughts and fears of the white chalk line.
They open their mouths to let out a scream,
but it is only the beginning of a very long
dream...

In no time they're down with a cry,
of pain as my brain starts to fry,
Living my life in a lie,
waiting for them to walk by,
letting it out from inside,
shrieking as my thoughts coincide,
with the last moments they spend alive.

13 years ago

And we walked along the beach,
the air smelling of chlorine and bleach.
And I loved her,
but my razor was within my reach.
Slash.
And we talked
Slash.
Yet we walked
Slash.
And she screamed
Slash.
My eyes beamed
Slash.
Hanging low was her head
Slash.
I, counting the drops she bled...

And she left a trail along the beach, that smelled
of
blood, chlorine and bleach.
It was only the beginning...

royalty
by Manuel Tamayo

I can feel it growing inside me,
the curse of a thousand fools.
The death of a thousand crimson flags,
and the breaking of all its rules.
kill the King
watch him die.
Burn the bastard
bury him alive.
I knew it was me the end of time.
The dawning of a new age the last in line.

Kill the Queen
her hand is dead. Plague across the land
and the sea turns red.

March Omens
by Carla Taylor

The geese are flying over.
And I wonder what it means
Besides The obvious

Are these check marks in the sky
marking my mistakes,
reminding me "You can't fly"?

Or do these formations signal that
I've won? That we have the
Victory?

Maybe the god of the geese
is just giving me his
"High Five."

It's hard to say.

THE WORD

by Carla Taylor

There was something wrong, she knew that
there was
something wrong that evening when she
found a small stick of white chalk
at the foot of the stair
on the second floor landing;
but it was not until she climbed the sixteen
steps to the third and her door that she saw the
true
meaning of the omen,
or at least had a clue
to its latent intent.
She was searching through her handbag for the
key, and so at first she didn't
see it. It was only when she
fumbled for the lock that she
became aware of something scrawled in
chalk across the
darkened door,
a single word, just underneath the tarnished
numbers:
more.
At first it didn't seem to do a thing.
Then slowly, unaware, she raised a
finger to her glasses, while her
other hand went groping for the
beat between her breasts.
From somewhere came the stutter of a single
passing car, and then
the fallen key was ringing through her head.
A period to all things left unsaid.
She shook herself, and stooped to pick it
up, and when she rose she raised her
hand, and drew her fingers very
slowly through the sign.
No need to stay to ponder its
significance. Too late to stop.
The dust between her fingers was enough.
She touched the lock.
It clicked: but for a moment more she
stayed her hand, and rubbed the white and
silent stuff of prophecy
between her breasts,
and sighed.
A promise from the past?
More like a cruel and quiet mockery,
all that didn't wait for her inside.

Morning Prayer While Staring at the Bedboard February 28

by Carla Taylor

The clock reads 6:53 What a coincidence,
It's too early.....
The clock reads 7:53 Another coincidence,
Now I'm too lazy.

Staring at the maps of a tree's life in the pine
design
Startling pictures emerge.
Rings become iso-rythms, indicating elevation
(not the John Deere / corn crib kind).
Knotholes become craters where the of star hit.
There are views from far above
Topographic landscapes that someone must have
drawn
(How could these just happen?)
cross sections of a hill and as inactive volcano
I can see the pool of magma deep inside waiting.

Oh Lord, stir the dying fire in my soul
And just, please, help me get up.
I have to read "The Conversion of the Jews."

Waves

by Ted M. Thompson

In
Mighty
Flow of frigid undulation
Beat
Rhythmically upon Maine's
South shore
Waves.

Sound
Of waves
Carried on the waffling wind
Comes to
Ear
By way
Of pulsating molecules
Emulating
Waves.

Mind
That hears
Within it's cage of bone
Soon tunes
Out
Until
Tiring of other stimuli
It returns to
Waves

Satori

by Ted Thompson

It is not
The moment
Of elevated gusto
But the moment
Of comfortable enjoyment
That we learn

If this is a chimera
Called life
is to become
Substantial
And human.

Not Disneyland
Nor winning Lotto
But sipping coffee
In the gathering darkness
With the departing sun
Highlighting
Your hair

Black Swamp

by Ted Thompson

Ohio fields
Row upon row
Of brown October corn
Where once
Was Black Swamp,
Dense tangle of woods and water,
Barrier to travel and exploration
Even separator of Hostile militias.
But tamed over time
By those
Who suffered flies,
Mosquitoes,
Malaria, cholera.
They struggled;
They learned.
By cutting
Burning,
Ditching,
persisting
Created these rich farms.

But what of today?
Can we slash the tangle
Of poverty and crime?
Drain the swamp
Of corruption and despair, Suffer and persist?
Will the future admire
The richness *we've* created Or be turned aside
By the barrier *we've* left Where carrion insects
Buzz over the stinking swamp?

Driven

by Ted M. Thompson
(9/26/94; rev. 9/28/94)

Down winding
Maple-alleyed roads
To the striates.
Friends sharing youth
Like a soda with
Four straws.
Through the windows
Flash flat fields, Faster and faster,
Pasture blending with corn. Acceleration
Freeing our spirits
High on speed and bravado
Until looming taillights
Bring us down.
The desperate brake
Restores *life's* grip.
Flush of adrenaline
Starts the laughter;
Reaching for cigarettes
We pass the glowing lighter.

Cigarettes and time
Go up in smoke.
The last wisps
Dissipate.
Desperately speeding
I commute
To smoke-free buildings
Of stoney angst
Where mortality
Hangs like a ceiling.

(I read of a child who died of abuse, and wrote this poem)

by Francine Tolf

Little darling, pretty one
no mother held or murmured
to,
they buried you with welts
and scars,
and you sleep now beneath
the stars.

They say that stars and
planets make
sweet music only angels hear,
but surely, softly, where you
lie
The spheres sing you a
lullaby.

Now earth will rock you
tenderly,
now rains will wash your
baby tears.
You suffered more than can
be told,
and you were only two years
old.

The Lady at the Wells Street Art Fair

by Francine Tolf

I wonder if the woman
in the leopard-printed tights
still goes to the Wells Street Art Fair?

I saw her there years ago
as I shuffled past booths full of
feathered masks and cheap jewelry.
She had a bouffant blond wig
and was flirting outrageously with musicians
twenty years her junior.

Later, after a palm reading that proved false,
a little tired and hot and hung-over,
I could not help but notice her
dancing with abandon on the top of an old pick-up truck,
with what appeared to be a large bowl of fruit on her head.

I have a blue plastic beer glass
from the Wells Street Art Fair,
but as souvenirs go,
I value my memory of that lady
much more.

Zoo Scene

by Francine Tolf

The malevolent-faced boy confronts
the low-slunk cat
pacing in restless ovals
with pure nastiness:
"You a ugly mo-fucker!
You hear me? You ugly."

The jaguar does not
meet the boy's snapping, angry eyes,
does not notice him.
His fluid torso pivots
at exactly the same points
at either end of his cage.
His eyes do not see us.
It is painful to watch him!

The scowling boy
is neither fluid nor beautiful.
Furious
at the big cat's indifference,
he makes a horrid face
and belts out a shriek
which the cat
shows no sign of hearing.

The rage
this boy so longs to behold
will not be given to him by this creature, Oh
but the bars on its cage are thick and cruel...
the boy grips the hand rail hard
and stares at them.

Tiger lily

by Francine Tolf

Tiger lily, leopard lily,
burning in the gardens ruffled with
sweet peas, hollyhocks,
white and lavender phlox--

not pink or blue, no--you
a fierce orange speckled black,
your petals arching back,

curling crown-like into rings,
so your pistil, like a scepter, springs
up proud and tall, its aim
straight as a candle's flame--

Leopard-flower, tiger's child,
pulsing in gardens with butterflies, honeysuckle,
half royal, half wild;
like the jungle cat
barely tamed into a pet
by some ancient pagan king--

with what joy, each summer long,
jungle-like, vibrant
into summer's lengthening shadows,
I hear you sing.

At the Joliet Train Station
by Francine Tolf

What makes me conjecture
this man is particularly proud?
He's a businessman, obviously,
a lawyer or an accountant,
with a businessman's good suit and briefcase,
yet--a sort of arrogance
seems to emanate from him
(or it could easily be my imagination!)
but--
his skin is so Ethiopian-dark,
and his handsome profile so unforgiving--
could he have withstood one too many insults
from people possessing neither his intelligence
nor his dignity,
only a lighter skin?

Who knows? Who knows
how he would have reacted
to the pulsating black teenagers with their
boom-boxes, their loud obscenities
strutting through the cars of the L train
I caught earlier tonight?

But his daughter knows nothing of that,
nothing of my evening impressions.
She holds her daddy's hand
in a once-luxurious midwestern train station
and flashes me, through long eyelashes,
a dazzling smile
(which, once given,
confounds the little one to shyness).
And she clutches in her other hand
a doll, hard-traveled, obviously treasured-
a plastic creature of white skin
and tumbling yellow hair.

How her daddy must adore her,
this *lovely* little girl dressed so beautifully
in pink, with heart-shaped barrettes and a
matching purse!-
his beautiful baby clutching
her white doll with her plastic sea-blue eyes.

Mary at Paulina Place

by Francine Tolf

My sister told me that Mary
was committed to an institution at seventeen,
and stayed inside of them for the next twenty
years,
with few visits from her family
until she came here.

It is hard to tell her age, though:
she's over weight and shy,
with very bad teeth
and the huge, gap-toothed grin of a child.

When I came to see my sister last week,
Mary was in the rocking chair hugging
the enormous black and white house cat
who lazily accepts bursts of affection from
residents.
I asked Mary if she was Miss Kitty's favorite,
and she laughed and laughed at my mistake,
telling me,
'It's a him!'

I have images I carry inside of me
of certain moments that are given to me like
gifts:
two pelicans floating through pink
above a harbor in Monterey
a loping teen-aged kid taking off and leaping
to touch the arm of a lamppost when he thought
no one was looking--

now I have a picture of Mary, laughing,
burying her face into the fur of a big fluffy cat,
rocking back and forth in a square of sunlight.

For Cynthia (who gives me facials)

by Francine Tolf

Cynthia soothes with the silken touch
and large, calming presence
of a woman drawn by Picasso.
Her hands are soft and boneless
though not dainty
as she strokes and massages
with fragrant lotions
my face, transforming
my frown lines,
the knot of worry in my forehead
into what feels like
smooth loveliness.

Anger, irritation, jealousy
seem never to have marred her soul;
she is like some ancient priestess
ministering to Beauty in her salon,
happy to share Her secrets with women
and indulge in them herself.

In my dreams,
I would be like *Cynthia,*
mixing rose-and cedar-scented potions as
beautiful wind-chimed music plays, mingling
with women, making them more beautiful with
my knowledge.

(There are less important things, and less
magical,
to do in this world.)

I know you have a magic lamp

by Gale Tolf

Do you have a magical lamp
like Aladdin
One which I could arouse
high
By rubbing possessively with
my hands?

Would yours shine by
caressing with my tongue
Exploring every crevice like
a Sung lamp?
Is yours ornamented with
curves and colors

Geometrical beauty like a
Tiffany lamp?
Or is yours a pillar of wood
tall and valiant
Yet unobtainable because my
fires might burn it?

I know you have a lamp and I want it!

SONNET TO FRANCINE

by Gale Tolf

Scandinavian warrior sister, kindred to my soul
My protective Valkyrie, bareseatted on a horse
I know you seek my liberation but - please! - don't control
My fate as my escape is planned by me, of course
After a few days of battle how pleasant it is at night
To talk of culture with Freija with candlelight
The stuff of our discussions comes out with poetry
Our poems are so divergent it mystifies me
You march to work daily with ax and spear
At night you relate tails of healing planet earth
Your staunch support of animals makes me endear
You to me as an Amazon valuing your worth
My present job is to praise the goddess with my verse
I long to share my sonnets with you and converse

SONNET TO KATHERINE

by Gale Tolf

Dear David, let me embrace you to the Tolf family clan
We're a tribe of long legged beauties never lacking for a man
Yet you have won the jackpot by marrying Katherine, a witch,
A lot like me in most respects, ancestral blood which
Goes back to the Rennaisance and Reformation ages
Women like your wife tricked the mob and made history pages
My sister burns incense at the altar of love and beauty
Suppressing evil fairies and conjuring gold in alchemy
Kath and I both quit messing round in magic
Myself, I turn my hand at poems and plays relating to the tragic
Countenence I felt mixed up with the occult as Doctor Faust
The price we paid in knowledge gained by what our forms cost
Underneath my sister's high Anglican veneer
Is a worshipper of Aphrodite, armed and sincere

LEDA

by Gale Tolf

In two weeks time an egg floats to a safe harbor and possesses me
Erotically perusing her father - I am Leda inside my womb
Give me a male mute swan aroused with tempestuous beating wingspan
Feathered fury personified by the lust of Zeus driven my desire
Fertilize my recurrent Helen, my monthly daughter of three days duration
Who dies a bloody death every full moon with her grace and beauty lost for eternity
To come back in a fortnight when the milky way is lit to use my body for resurrection

Haunted Eyes

by Gale Tolf

Your eyes aren't mirrors but are glazed and see inward
Clue to the demons from the damned trapped within
But cacophonous devils whose battering shouts never stop
Not the whimsical gargoyles I people my paper with
I avert my gaze from your haunted eyes
Sensing still your rail thin presence of your aged black form
Sitting straight, bearing with ancestral dignity
Torture like an African king
No witch-doctor with chicken bones and drums to help you
Or dignify your incredible suffering by casting out your death
Into penned piglets and by ritually slicing their throats
Let their blood flow back to earth bringing life again to your eyes

OPULENCE

by Gale Tolf

I sprang to life at twilight with pink and mauve skies
Turning purple under deep ultramarine blue
With zombies bereft of mind- ignoring my cries
To break there catatonic dense gray and view
The paradisial glory heralding the day of my birth
Heaven sent beauty balm for wrinkles earned on earth
The once innocent joy of a virgin kore's form
Has led to a poet and artist who doesn't conform
Great gods! I worship nature and am lost in industry
Grant me gifts of future dusk to keep my sanity!

SHOE SIZE 10 B

by Gale Tolf

Poems fall about my face like lace snowflakes
Upon reaching their destination they dissolve
Into psychotic weeping lunatic tales
Perceptions of alternative realities and truth
Attract me like a starved rat through a maze
My crimson heart is on a magical carpet ride
I am a zombie looking for eyes with stars
Galaxies of stars flooding towards me

Stars would make a man seem beautiful
Then I could wrap myself in oriental wool
To cover my vulnerable beige flesh
And press pulse beats back to its dominion
I'd race to my chest to pull out
My ruffled skirts and black flamenco shoes
To exercise my duende with a zambra
Showing with my ecstatic, sexual body
The throbbing passion I write in my poems

Athena's Spiders

by Gale Tolf

Is my mind so woven with webs by Athena's spiders
I mistake your kindness for depth of passion and desire?
To you, witches are fantasy creatures on brooms
So give me your carnal pleasure tool so I can groom
Old images of you from my mind and replace them with reality
Let my subconscious retreat, stand before me so I can see
With sensual delight your god-like form in the flesh
Quelling my cathartic longing as our bodies intermesh
Are you but a demon-- tempting not fulfilling?
Surely my erotic poems have told you that I'm willing
Entrust to me the secret of how to win your heart
My beauty is cloistered so I pursue you with my art
It's not nature's course to deny my sexual urging
Loss of you, in love in flesh, would be my mind's submerging

Answer to Rimbaud

by Gale Tolf

Christian fancy that hell finds souls engulfed in fire
I spent the season there possessed like a fury
Writing odes of love with my body wracked by desire
Longing to return to life and living with constant worry
My release date always slipped beyond my reach
Trapped with my memories and writing poems of each
Facet of my life in written form
Rebelling at the placid souls who conformed
To spending looming time with catatonic waiting
As their ids took over their egos forsaking
The rational for the schizophrenic
Surrealistic faces insanely photogenic
Little left of lucidity residual
Hell bent demons manifest visual

HELL AND HEAVEN SONNET

by Gale Tolf

I storm hell and seek heaven and Buddha, too
To get a promise of marriage with love from you
I can't burn candles but I can pray, chant and meditate
Since the love I feel for you is so tremendous and great
Have the same courage as I to part Maya's veil
Find a poet, artist and dancer in the name Gale
I want to write as a lover and not a fan
It's not your ego I Love but your essence which can
Haunt me even now with years passing in memory
Of youthful Apollo while I write in celibacy
My pitiful attempts at making love art
With a vicious jealous snake wound about my heart
Serpent sent by Scorpio don't imbue
My love sonnets with words I'11 come to rue

Untitled #1

by Staci J. Walker

The Daily Planet

April 1, 1994

Dear Superman,

You know I still cry over you? You big idiot, why did you have to go and be such a superhero? I mean, helping people out is one thing, but throwing your life away in some futile attempt for control is just plain stupid. I wanted you around forever. You weren't ever supposed to die.

I don't really know why I'm writing this. Except that you are still all I ever think about, and maybe writing is therapeutic. If I would tell anyone about us, they would never believe me. So I really can't talk to anyone about you. It's a horrible death to have to bear
all alone.

You know Luther's laughing. So I hear. I thought good guys were supposed to win and bad guys were supposed to lose. The universe has turned inside out and upside down. And I can't make sense of anything without you. Damn Luther.

So anyway, Superman, I live as best as I can ... considering. Everyone thinks I'm okay. I do my job as well as I can; I have good friends that keep me company. But nothing can successfully distract me from constantly remembering you. I can't get it through my head -- I just cannot believe that you're gone. And every once in awhile, when no one can see, I still cry. I will never understand this.

I keep hoping, against hope, that being a superhero and all, you can pull off some kind of spectacular stunt. I know that's called magical thinking, but it's all that I have left to keep me hanging on. And if you can somehow hear me, out there wherever you are, IF you still are -- PLEASE, somehow, let me know. Because, Superman, I really loved you. And I'11 be waiting.

Love ,

Lois Lane

Lois Lane

LL/sjw

To Mack

by Staci J. Walker

I thought I knew the answers;
I thought I knew the way.
But all became disaster.
Now I don't know what to say.

I told you that I loved you;
I thought you felt the same.
But now I feel like a fool
Not knowing who to blame.

You told me that you needed me;
You thought I felt the same.
But I don't need you, I never did.
I used you just for fame.

(But, God, I sure do want you)

Untitled #1

by Andrew J. Wall

The sand is damp beneath my feet
As I walk across the sands
I turn my head and see your face
We are holding hands

The winds blow softly across the sea
The waves are free of care
It flows an wonderfully
Through your beautiful hair

The moon above surrounds you
with its pale glow
You're so special to me
I'm so glad you know

I gaze into your eyes
I can see the stars above
I'm so glad I'm with you
'Cause you're the one I love

Untitled #2

by Andrew J. Wall

When we are together
I feel like I could fly
Taking you with me
So high up in the sky

I can see so clearly
From this glorious height
You have brought much joy to me
During this wonderful night

I feel so lonely
When we are apart
You have such a special place
in my heart

Thank you for the memories
Of the starlight beams
True love has found me
At night in my dreams

HELL

by Andrew J. Wall

As I am driving
Along this lonely road
I think of the future
I've just killed a toad

I look at the plains
I've just seen a sparrow
It flies with it's grace
I think I'll use an arrow

I close my eyes
And use my head
To realize that
I am dead

Rock Grasp

by Andrew J. Wall

The wind is strong
At this height
Giving me
So much might

I used the ropes
To keep my feet
This tricky land
I will beat

This truly is
Risky action
But it gives me
Some satisfaction
I'll see this through
Till the end
Then you'll see
And comprehend

Untitled #3

by Andrew J. Wall

I wander through these fields today
I watch all of creation
In this month of May
This life, an exclamation

I really need your loving heart
To help me through the sorrow
I really hope we never part
I couldn't live tomorrow

All of the colors that I've seen
I only love a few
I think you know what I mean
I see them all in you

These colors seen in reverie
Seen only in the fall
In you they will always be
The lovliest of all

My Renewal

by Kim Renee Worley

When my work is done I've done all I can,
To build my nest, to lend my hand.
Gathering my thoughts,
Lifting myself up.
as I wonder where the day went,
Restoring my strength,
Rest is good, it's something I need,
to prepare myself for tomorrow's lead.
So whenever I have the chance to rest,
rest I will to give my heat.

THESEUS
ON THE PROWL

by Bill Yarrow

Theseus is lost in his body. He falls
down his throat and disappears for good.
What's left of his humiliation is appetite.
What's left of his flesh is falsehood.

He crawls toward his reappearance
but ambition gets in the way.
At the end, only his blood comes true.
So says the ghost of his honesty.

It's nighttime in the streets of Crete.
He's looking for his pride.
But what's left of self-direction

if Ariadne's still alive?

The Wordeater-92 Student Jury

Pat Erickson
Michael Fletcher
Jennifer Frye
Jeff Hicks
Tracie Laczynski
Mary Francis Lund

For a selection to be printed in this issue,
four of the above students had to vote for it's acceptance.
For award winners, only John F. Stobart is responsible.

John F. Stobart - Advisor
Brad Dornick - Editor

AWARDS

Students Awards:
Amy Lingafetter - poetry $20.00
Dan Ferguson - fiction $20.00
Michael Fletcher - Covers $20.00
(front & back covers)

Alum Awards:
Nancy Lockhart
Francine Tolf
Gale Tolf

Faculty Awards:
Ted Thompson

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Manuscripts and cover designs must be submitted to:
John F. Stobart, Room C1069-J.J.C.
by
February 23, 1996 - Wordeater-93
March 22, 1996 - Wordeater-94
May 26, 1996 - Wordeater-95

Manuscripts should be typed and will not be returned.

Illegible copies will not be considered.

Note: In Wordeater-91, Gina Bakon's work was attributed to Gina Baker.
Loudmouth McKracken,
Wordeater's often forgotten senior editor apologizes for the mistake.

The Wordeater contains selections from students, faculty, and friends of Joliet Junior College.
However, only current students are eligible for monetary awards.

MF